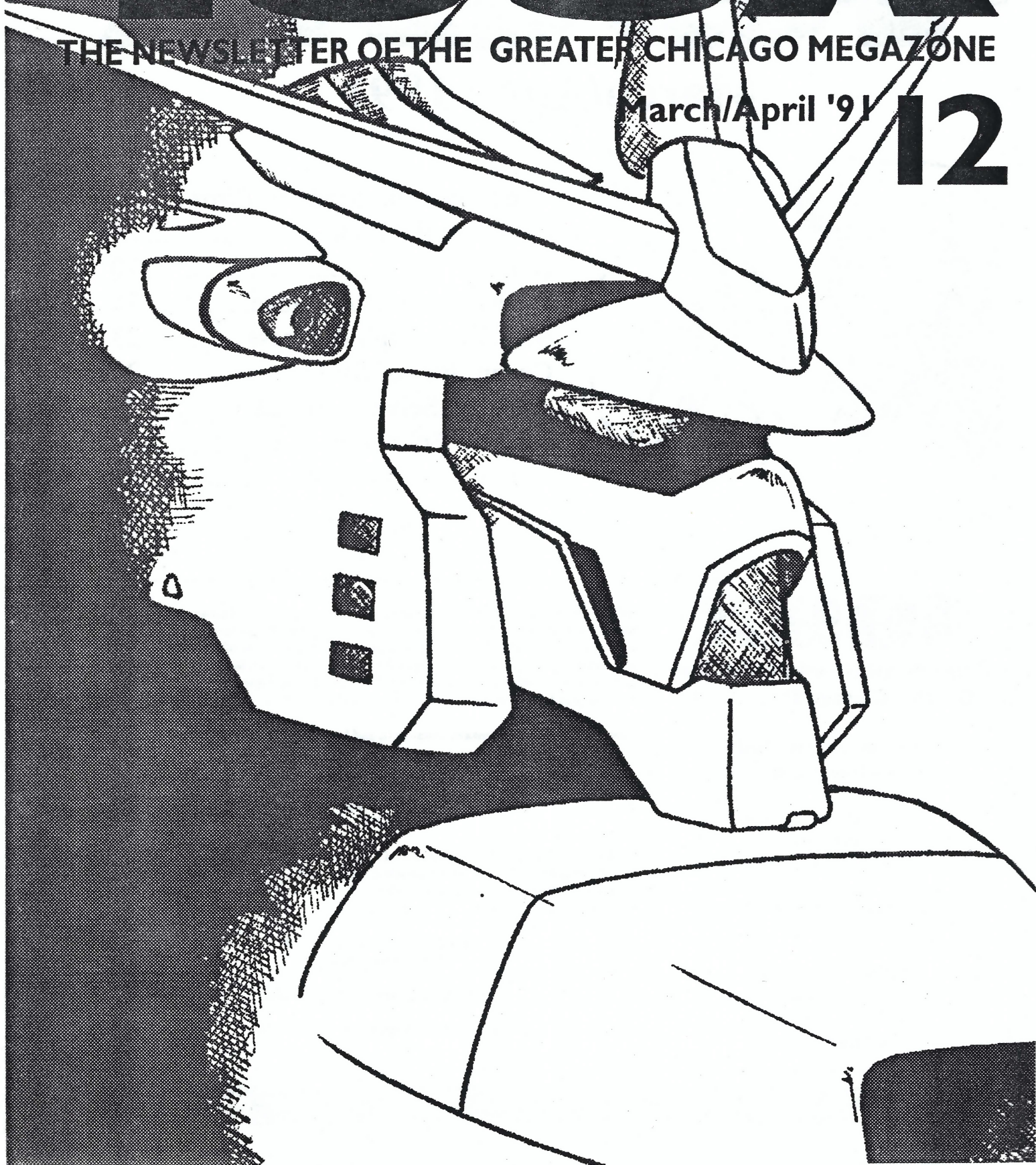


1999X

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CHICAGO MEGAZONE

March/April '91

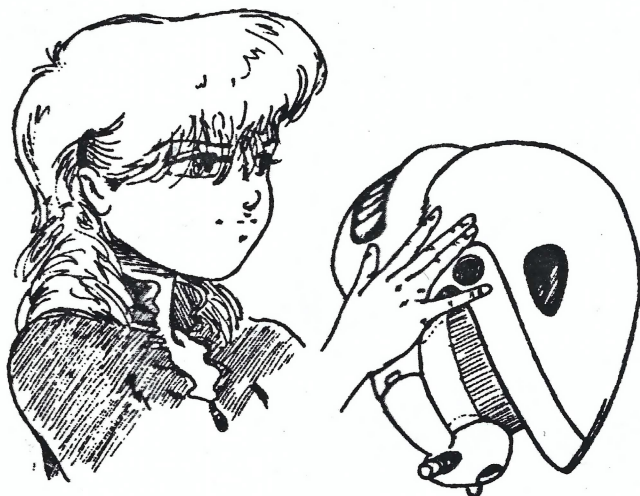
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199X

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199X

**The Official Newsletter of the
Greater Chicago MegaZone**

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Issue 13 (May/June '91): May 11, 1991

Issue 14 (July/August '91): July 13, 1991

* * *

The Greater Chicago MegaZone

Formerly C/FO Chicago
Re-established 1989

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Newton Ewell

Vice President
D'Andre Williams

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THE EDITOR HAS MADE AN ERROR...

Vladimir J. Len

Welcome to issue 12 of 199X! Call this the official "software conversion" issue: it all started one Monday when my Aldus PageMaker software upgrade came in the mail. I installed it as fast as I could and converted the newsletter file over to it and WHAM; it crashes every time I try doing anything with the text. A call to Aldus technical support later and I find out that the type manager FaceLift (a program which creates fonts of different sizes and shapes) doesn't work with the new PageMaker! Oh boy. Anyways, I install the type manager which came with the upgrade and 3 hours later everything works fine. Of course, this will all be repeated in a couple of weeks since the FaceLift upgrade is due in a week or so. The tug of war continues...

So the cover looks like an issue of Newtype...got a problem with it? Since Newtype skipped doing a Gundam 0083 cover, we decided to make up for it. (You'd think that 0083 would get more press than it has!)

Thanks to all who contributed to make this a better newsletter - especially the artists: isn't it nice to have a newsletter loaded with *original* artwork? You bet it is. Artists appearing in this issue include Robert DeJesus (back cover), Dennis Richards, and Bryant Velez (front cover).

* * *

It could only happen in Chicago, where politics is known as the "best spectator sport available". So-called "Old Guard" members (or a single member) decided to slam the Chicago MegaZone with a two page letter at CapriCon, which voices complaints of mismanagement and dirty-dealing in

the club, making the officers sound like a Chicago style political machine. I personally found the letter taped inside an elevator in the hotel (attached, with reinforced packing tape, over a framed hotel menu...I bet the hotel liked that!). The contents of the letter can be found in the "Letters to the Editor" section, along with a later published "appendix".

In the letter, the "Old Guard" points out that the MegaZone is "a non-democratically led club as it lacks even the flimsiest scrap of a generally ratified constitution". Get real - now don't get me wrong, but we are not some political group or association of professionals. The Chicago MegaZone is (after all is said and done) a bunch of fans who get together to watch and trade cartoons (OK...Animation...). Real important. But to many of us, this is important (so much that we shed blood over it...). But do we really need to go through all of the problems and headaches of politics just so someone can get his/her copy of Bubble Gum Crisis? Not really.

What we probably need more is a "statement of direction", updated annually (or every 6 months), which lists continuing projects and expectations which define the MegaZone's activities over the course of time. This document (however small) would certainly be easier to produce than a constitution (which nowadays could use a team of lawyers to draw up), and would provide members with a sense of what to expect with paid membership.

Regarding the last complaint - I personally found this as the only legitimate gripe within the body of the

letter - the rest is full of personal opinions and general statements which I feel only add up to garbage...

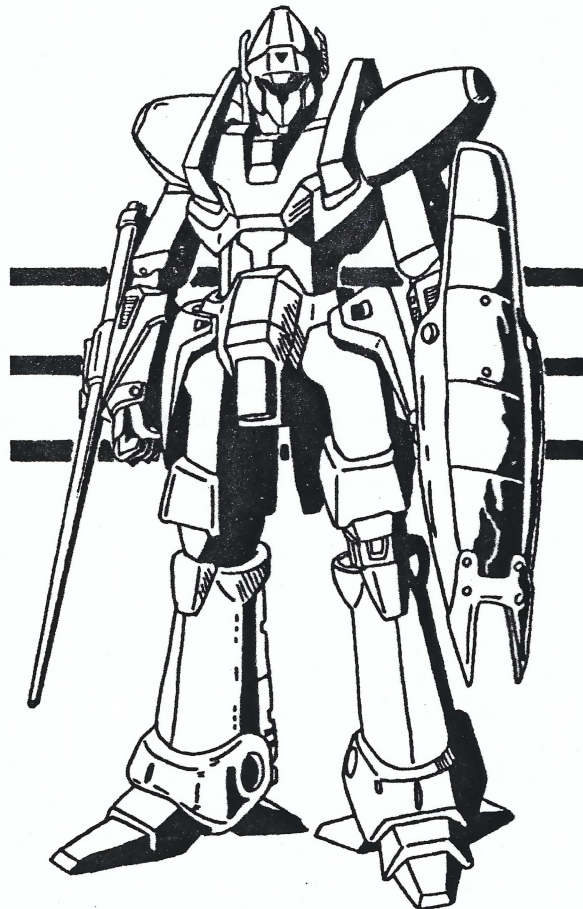
Another point brought to light is the problem of accessibility to (public) meeting places and the leadership gathering at it's own convenience at locations and on dates known only to itself - locations which are much more comfortable and accessible to the participants than the regular announced meetings and more conducive to watching anime of a controversial nature." There are two problems with this statement.

As far as I know, we tried to get a good meeting location in Chicago. It didn't happen. Yes, it would be nice to have the meeting place so accessible that no one would have problems with transportation, but it's not possible: you can't please everyone all the time. I live in the NW suburbs and any location is difficult to get to without personal transportation (which is tough when you're paying your way through college). If I can live with it (being a member since the old Columbia College days of the C/FO) so can others.

Further, membership in the MegaZone does not allow access into the personal lives of other members. This should be common sense. If certain members wish to gather at private homes to do whatever (which probably is not always sitting around the TV watching anime), that is their justifiable right. I don't think that anyone has a home which could hold the entire membership without becoming dangerously overcrowded...

Secondly, the MegaZone holds it's meetings at a public library. We cannot go around presenting video

such as Cream Lemon or Wander Child (although as popular as they may be here in anime fandom or in Japan) openly. Anyone can get copies of these videos and watch them in their own privacy or company of others, but in a society which would easily slap "pornography" labels on such video, we shouldn't be displaying it in public if we wish to continue use of the facilities available.



In regards to the treasury - I must apologize because due to CapriCon guide production a January '91 newsletter was not available, and in it would have been published the current balance sheet. It is, however, in this issue. I personally found no discrepancies which could add up to "frittering away hard-earned dues". Otherwise, the author makes statements of personal opinion and accusations of

embezzlement, which have no documentation.

Anyone can do that.

Every meeting the club holds a business meeting to discuss the status of the MegaZone, current projects, problems, and so on. I don't remember a meeting which had someone get up and voice all of these opinions. (Note: I don't get to every meeting, but if it happened, I have enough ears out there that I'd know about it.) As editor, I never received a letter (this or any other) voicing complaints regarding the MegaZone. Maybe he couldn't get to the meeting (which is not impossible as stated in the letter - public transportation is available and car pools exist). Maybe he can't bring himself to face the officers and membership with complaints and needed to do it in writing.

However, by the way letters were sent to other clubs around the US and by the content of the letter, it seems that he/she has a personal problem with certain members and wishes to cause trouble to bring personal satisfaction to him/herself.

Wonderful.

Anyway, I urge you to read the letter. Make your decision. Read and listen what others have to say. Write and voice your opinion. Attitudes and dealings rarely change if no one complains. Even better, write directly to me at the address below, in case you don't trust the MegaZone address...

And it's even an election year here in Chicago...

Vladimir Len
c/o Games Plus
20 West Busse Avenue
Mount Prospect IL 60056

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor's Note: This is a letter which was sent to anime organizations across the nation, as well as the Chicago MegaZone. It is reprinted here in its entirety.

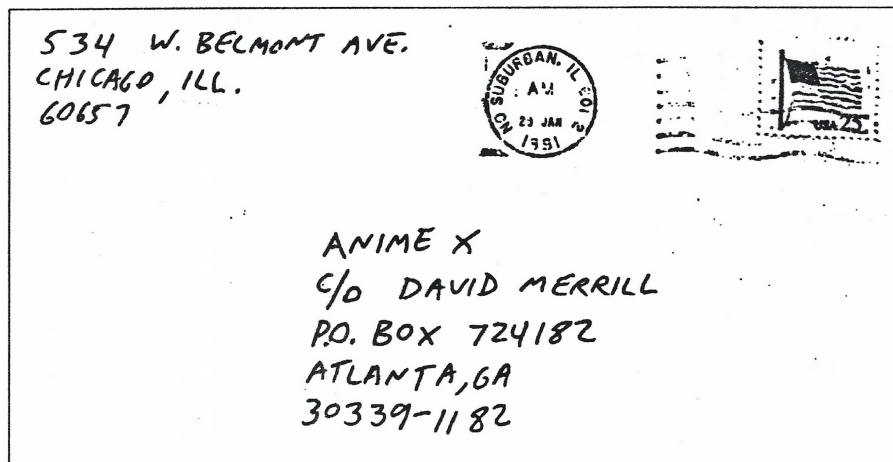
"A Manifesto from the Old Guard"

To all all persons presently affiliated with or considering affiliation with the Greater Chicago Megazone: We former members and supporters of this club issue this warning. We also speak for all others who do not wish to express their views due to ignorance of the facts, apathy, or fear of ostracism.

There was a time when fans of Anime in Chicago could gather at a convenient and comfortable locale and watch Anime or discuss their particular interests. We remember evenings of enjoyment and unregimented conversation among a group of friends. Club offices - if any - were quite informal positions, and membership was also very egalitarian. But now, some members of the Megazone have imagined themselves more equal than others!

What we refer to is the development within the club of one (or perhaps several) competing groups vying for power through various unethical (and downright contemptible) means. These cliques are, by their very nature, insular and exclusive of the general membership of the club.

It is difficult to describe the manner of these developments, so they will be closely characterized instead. What seems to appear at first is a leading group of certain Megazone officers and what can only be called a coterie of assorted slimy fellow travellers associated for their own imagined social gain. Various other persons seem to be affiliated solely out of



This envelope contained the first letter sent to anime clubs.

necessity to the ringleaders or to give the whole group a much-needed air of legitimacy (we realize that this may sound personal in nature, but we cannot resist the temptation to discover how long the mist of cerebral darkness so characteristic of the ringleaders shall keep them from figuring out who is being referred to. You know who you are!). For example, persons with overseas contacts are cultivated while others with longstanding membership and loyalty are excluded.

Going beyond the personal, however, we need to mention a characteristic which appears to most vividly describe this group. They show a blatant disregard for any kind of democratic principles. Though they may claim legitimacy under the so-called Megazone "constitution", they have no such legitimacy as this document was never by a referendum to the membership, paid or otherwise. Therefore, claims of authority are in fact illegal. This is especially true of the titles of office held by people that were assumed with little or no acquiescence on the part of the rank and file. We need only remind the reader that the mail-out vote appeared to have been tampered

with concerning the statements of the candidates during the Vice-Presidential race of a few months back. What all this truly shows is that a group of self-seeking "officers" effectively elevated each other into power via the use of offices just recently created by those same individuals. Due to the understandable ignorance of the rank-and-file members of the club who may be young or recent newcomers, these developments have made for an organization with a top-heavy nature and an overabundance of bureaucracy when only three officers (such as President, Secretary and Treasurer, or what you may choose to call similar offices) would suffice.

Even more undemocratic is the style of the clique's associations. These self-seeking elitists are particularly fond of arranging clandestine (and unannounced) meetings and get-togethers at odd times (and dates) and in distant locales conveniently out of earshot of the general membership. This shows still more contempt for those who lack ready transportation to these "meetings", some of which have occurred out of state and in restaurants. Such locations are far more comfortable and conducive to meetings than

the sterile austerity of the surroundings that the "Leadership" has saddled the rank and file with. Yet, the officers defend these functions as private affairs unassociated with anything concerning the Megazone! In truth, however, matters discussed at these "private" meetings are of paramount importance to the Megazone as they relate to the allocation of funds within the treasury. It might be added that the dues of the general membership support the treasury, but who is

even in the most unverifiable circumstances? It isn't only for business that the clique members seek out cozy surroundings and creature comforts - they also gather to bask in the imagined mutual glow of combined (inflated) egos, reassuring each other that they have greater worth and status than others - including the rank and file of the club, apparently.

The most hideous manifestation of the clique's egomania - the most psycho-

have steered them into a group hypnosis which has put the entire Megazone on a path of degeneration the club far more quickly than the clique could want to hope.

Although several former club Presidents (such as, say, Ted Piwowar and D.B. Killings) succeeded in keeping the club out of trouble, the current clique is pushing it in a direction in which good-old-fashioned greed and vain-glorious arrogance (and the haughty airs of the officers who are behind all this) rule supreme. I guess that us Old Guard members just don't measure up to the new, "streamlined" (sic) image of the Megazone member that the clique has in mind.

* * *

Editor's Note: This is the letter which was distributed at CapriCon 1991. It is reprinted here in its entirety.

"An Edict of Enlightenment"

To all participants of CapriCon XI affiliated with or considering membership in the Greater Chicago Megazone, we - the Old Guard - issue this call to first examine the current nature of this (Anime) organization. We would first like to point out that this is a non-democratically led club as it lacks even the flimsiest scrap of a generally ratified constitution. All who claim duties and titles of office within it really have no legal basis for their activities. The Megazone is, in fact, administered by a closed circle of several individuals and their personal friends who may have scant claims to past appointments, but who in reality constitute and "Old Boy" (and Girl) Network.

What little consideration this group may show the general membership is but a thin layer of patronizing condescension meant to appease it and portray the "officers" as "friends" of the rank and file. This becomes clear

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60191

ハイパー
スナイパー

PLEASE CONVEY TO GREATER
CHICAGO MEGAZONE INC. (SAT. 26th)

This is the letter which was sent to the MegaZone. The kana "Hyper Sniper" was located on the back flap, hand drawn in.

present at these exclusive decision-making sessions that effectively control the purse-strings of the club? The same officers who are involved in the clique. Why the secrecy of the proceedings? We only need reveal that a former Treasurer was ousted from the club after scrupulously filing tax returns on the club's income - and was ousted by the apparent efforts of a member of the clique who has been accused of embezzlement by other Anime clubs he was a member of elsewhere. Besides, does any Megazoner even know what a financial statement of the club's funds looks like? Have they ever been shown one,

logically abusive and socially damning one - is their overbearing arrogance towards all others of the club who may not necessarily share their viewpoints, have differing artistic interests, or who simply have social values which the biggest faultfinders in the clique judge "unfit" because of some form of jealousy or hubris - or simply because these "unfit" ones might provide a form of opposition to the clique (i.e. popularity). The opportunistic snobs of the clique(s) exclude all those who are possibly more gifted (artistically, intellectually, or otherwise) that they because the delusions of their vanity (and lust for power)

if we reveal their conduct regarding the month-by-month government of the club. First, the general Megazone meetings are held in a location altogether outside Chicago and inaccessible to public transportation. At these meetings any non-officers are typically excluded from all impromptu policy discussions in a highly abrupt and surly manner. Beyond that, the leadership gathers at its own convenience at locations and on dates known only to itself - locations which are much more comfortable and accessible to the participants than the regular announced meetings and more conducive to watching Anime of a controversial nature. These congenial yet clandestine social get-togethers are often held in a neighboring state so that the leading group may limit accessibility to the general membership and choose those members to whom they wish to extend the privilege of being in their "refined" company. We warn any newcomers to Anime fandom that this "privilege" is often extended to various non-officers or even non-members that the inner clique deems as having some value, ability, or other such characteristic which it could expediently exploit (such as contacts with other Anime clubs). This nicety is quickly rescinded from those whom the clique fails to make ready stooges of in order to pack its ranks or replace officers still loyal to original Megazone principles.

The Greater Chicago Megazone is run by an entrenched and stratified bureaucracy not above such tactics as ostracism of people they consider rivals for power, popularity, or those who may be more gifted than they perceive themselves to be. This is accomplished through a general predisposition to psychological abuse which the ruling group exhibits in its interpersonal relations with other members. Specifically, they display great intolerance (of the differing talents and interests of others) border-

ing on arrogance. Always quick to make value judgements, the also excel at finding faults (physical, emotional, and character) in other while any personal faults them may all too often show are beyond reproach to these hypocrites.

At this juncture, we would like to inform the reader that we fully realize that we may be accused of seeking to destroy this club. We anticipate that our opposition will attack us for cultivating ambitions towards power within the Megazone. To this, we reply that we in no way aspire to club office, nor do we wish in any way to engage in internal Megazone politics. Most importantly, we stress that we are not accusing every Megazone officer of putting on airs. In fact, we would like to acknowledge the past accomplishments of club presidents such as Ted Piowar and D.B. Killings in increasing the membership rosters and popularizing Anime in the name of the Megazone throughout the Chicago area. Furthermore, we praise the longstanding loyalty of such senior members as Jim Brown, Dave Ewell, George Pruitt (among others) to Anime fandom and club principles. Meanwhile, some in the present leadership consistently and carefully avoid mentioning this while surreptitiously awarding themselves the laurels that belong to others by all rights.

Of great importance to the leaders of any organization is its treasury; and the treasury has not escaped the greed of the upstarts who have so insidiously usurped power and placed one of their own in charge of allocating the assets held therein (assets, we might add, which were collected as dues from the general membership) - one intimately associated with a leading member of the group who came from elsewhere dragging the foul spectre of embezzlement in his wake. With over a hundred paid members, the monetary holdings of the Megazone must be

truly vast. It comes as no surprise that all decisions regarding the club spending are carried out in utter secrecy at gatherings in which even some of the senior members are denied access! Who can guess what kind of pizzas, party favors or other luxuries the hard-earned dues of the members are frittered away on during these "planning sessions". The "officers" should be using these funds for much-needed repairs on D.B. Killings' overworked VCRs or to pay a small rent on a meeting hall in Chicago.

In the light of these revelations, the clique and its lackeys will attempt to cover their august behinds by appeasing the justifiable anger of the rank and file club membership with a deluge of cheaply printed T-shirts. Or in a typically patronizing gesture they may promise to be less reticent in assisting in the duping of tapes for the general membership. The hidden understanding is that the clique - although ostensibly assisting Mr. Killings in duping tapes - will then be utterly free to monopolize the masters in a way that Mr. Killings has not. In reply to such hasty, weak, flimsy and half-assed excuses we can wisely quote this: "Oh, what a tangled web you weave, when first you practice to deceive!"

Affectionately yours,
The Old Guard
534 West Belmont
Chicago IL (no zip code given)

Editor's Note: Due to time constraints, the editor cannot bring you the "appendix" this month. Look for it here next month. (Unless the Old Guard would like to furnish me with an electronic copy!)

* * *

Dear Doug (Killings),

I finished moving up here and immediately got in contact with the local

Japanese Animation Society. We meet twice a month, once at the University of Minneapolis, and then at the home of Patricia Morris. At the February 2nd meeting, I was talking with some of the members and mentioned that I was from the Chicago Megazone. A John Hughes asked me if we weren't having some kind of massive political upheaval or something. I told him that I knew nothing about it, and that at least from December the club was doing very well.

At the February 9 meeting, John gave me a copy of a letter which had been mailed to the JAS. There is, as you can see, no signature and there was no return address on the envelope, although the post office stamp is suburban Illinois 60176 dated Jan. 23 1991. It seems to us that this guy forgot to enclose page two. (Either that or he needs to learn a lot about sentence structure.) John tells me that his other correspondence indicates the situation has now quieted down. I was wondering if you could tell me just what is going on down there. This guy is slinging a lot of mud and mailing it across the country to discredit the club. Whoever he is, he has a lot of brass telling everyone how the officers are doing everything behind closed doors, all the while hiding himself. If he's so fed up with the club, why not come out and say so in the open instead of sneaking around everyone else's backs?

Megazonedely Yours,
Tony Lentini

* * *

MegaZoners,

A few comments/observations concerning the MegaZone & the letter that was circulated around the Capricorn convention calling for a boycott of the anime room & the Zone in general. I'm very disappointed in the author of the letter because he chose to express

his views to the convention public & not the MegaZone itself, either through the monthly meetings or letters to the editor in 199X. If you are interested in generating dialogue & change within the MegaZone, deal with the Zone directly. Crying foul to the public doesn't promote change or dialogue, it only promotes fractionalization & politics.

The letter itself addressed several issues from the use of the Treasury funds to the behavior of certain Zone members. The overall tone of the letter complained about how the author felt that the Zone was controlled by the "in" clique who made all the decisions, spend the money, & more or less plotted to keep everything for themselves. Listening to a group of Zoners respond to that attitude, they felt that they can't help it if they're part of the "in" crowd. If the author has been around as long as they had & were as good as friends as they were, he would be part of the "in" crowd too. Besides, if he wanted to fit in, all he had to do was introduce himself & get to know them. I personally dislike both attitudes.

When I joined the MegaZone in late summer of 1990, I came to see anime primarily, & if I made some new friends along the way, that was great. Former V.P. Frank Sewald was very friendly & he introduced me to several people, which helped me to feel like a part of the Zone. My first observation about the Zone was that most of the members considered the Zone to be both a club based on a common interest & the basis of their primary social interaction. It was obvious to me that many of the members had been friends for a long time. That's great. Unfortunately, it presents a problem in how the MegaZone is seen from the eyes of an outsider. To someone who joins the Zone, wanting to become involved in the MegaZone as an organization, they are confronted with a group of friends who are

running the club. The immediate appearance/impression a newcomer perceives, is that to become involved in the organization, one must make friends with the "powers in control" in order to be involved. Unfortunately, the MegaZone's needs are known primarily by the leadership, and since they haven't let the general membership know the specific ways in which we can help, it tends to add to the general perception that the "in" crowd runs the Zone.

My suggestion to the letter's author would be to bring up your concerns during MegaZone group meetings where we can create some understandings. Also, make an effort to get to know the people, they're not a bad lot in general. My suggestion to the MegaZone, leaders & members are as follows:

- 1) All members should make an effort to be more outgoing to new faces among us. That's the only way to destroy any image of an "in" clique. If we wait for the new members to come to us, then we run the risk of appearing like snobs.

- 2) We need to further define the MegaZone organization so people can get involved immediately in the workings of the Zone. Examples might be the formation of committees to take care of some of the work needed within the Zone. A committee that's sole purpose is to greet new members would be nice. Said committee could also determine if new members would be interested in writing for 199X or providing art. Another committee could determine transportation needs & develop some kind of way to offer rides to those known to have problems getting to meetings. The more we spread the responsibilities around, the less likely we'll be accused of being cliques or becoming wrapped up in ourselves.

- 3) We desperately need to improve the

way we distribute tapes. We've grown so quickly in just the few months I've been part of the MegaZone that it's impossible to meet the demands placed on the few who can do the taping. Unfortunately, if demands aren't met, dissension grows.

Hopefully, this letter will succeed in its purpose, to generate dialogue within the MegaZone. Then we can find a way to satisfy everyone's needs.

Thom Riberdy

* * *

To the "Old Guard,"

I have read the letter you posted at Capricorn. Although I am not a member, I am part of the "In Group" to which you referred, and I felt that a response was in order. While I think that there is some merit in the letter's content, I feel it is both erroneous and completely inappropriate. While most of this does not merit a reply, there are two points that must be made.

First of all, the Chicago Megazone is democratic. All of the officers were elected for one year terms in July and will stand for election again this year. If you don't like the way these officers lead the club, you should run for office or speak at the meeting, not mass mail hate letters across the United States. If you don't want to run -- as you indicated in your letter -- vote for someone else. But realize that in the end, the elected officers, whether good or bad, are the people who offered to lead the Megazone, and they have the mandate of those who elected them for a year. If they are the jerks you say they are (and I don't mean to imply that they are or are not), they won't get re-elected.

Second, let me address the subject of private parties. Being a member of the Megazone entitles you to enjoy the viewing at the monthly meetings, to

get animation from the club library, and receive this newsletter. That's the deal. It does not entitle you to participate in anything that a member happens to do on his own just because it is anime related. What any officer or member does on his own is their personal business. I invite a dozen or so friends over to my apartment every week because I like them and enjoy their company. I don't feel that my membership in the Megazone compels me to let just anyone come over; these meetings are in no way connected with the Megazone.

Now, while your letter is about 80% fictitious allegations and hate mail, it does bring up some important points. First, we do have an "In-Group." This is something we have been aware of for some time. But contrary to your accusations, the "In-Group" does not consist of people who have "exploitable characteristics." It consists of people who are friends. Now although there are a few people who have been excluded because they are obnoxious, most of people are excluded because they haven't made the effort to make friends.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage every member of the Megazone to take some time off from watching anime during the meeting and introduce yourself. Get involved! If we get enough of you into the "In-Group," we won't have one!

Second, I agree that the anime program could be better. I'm not quite sure what you mean by "controversial" anime, but if you're referring to adult animation, the library forbids it. I believe I can make a great deal of improvement and I am volunteering to take over the program (which is what you should have done).

Third, we do need a constitution. While there were no dues, our what-Doug-says-goes constitution was fine, but now that money's involved,

something ought to be in writing.

Fourth, I agree that the T-shirts suck. Come on guys! How about at least putting the THE CHICAGO MEGA-ZONE on it in big bold letters? The quality could be a lot better too. T-shirts are a good idea, but do it right or don't do it at all.

Fifth, an accounting should be published in the newsletter of how club funds are spent. I understand that this will appear in this issue.

In conclusion, I think I speak for all members of the Megazone when I say that your efforts are not appreciated. Despite your assertion that you are not trying to destroy the club, I can't think of a more destructive means to your end than sending hate mail to every corner of the country. Get some courage and speak your mind at the monthly meetings. That is the forum for it.

- Matt Zell

NAN NI???

A continuing Japanese instructional by Karen S. Boomgarden

Wow. I feel like I'm under some obligation to keep expanding this column, given that the first three seemed to grow exponentially... I can't guarantee that this is going to happen, people. Be prepared for me to reach burnout stage at some point in the not-too-distant future, and produce nothing more than bilingual blithering...

I haven't gotten any responses to my plea for subject matter a couple of issues back, so I'm sort of floundering around. Sure, the second Gundam novel is out—but given how angry the first one made me, I'm not about to expose myself to another one.

AH! There is something I can tell you about! I managed to get my mitts on a copy of MANGAJIN, that often-talked-about-but-seldom-seen publication dedicated to "Japanese Pop Culture & Language Learning", as it states on the cover. I like it so much I sent off my \$35 for a subscription and a t-shirt! My only quibble is with the editors' attitude that one should never attempt to learn Japanese on one's own. Hey, folks—depending on where you live, that may be your only choice! For us, up here in CowTown, WI (also known as Delavan, the Circus City—city? with 5600 people???) , learning on our own has until very recently been the only option, unless one wanted to trek 50 miles one way into Milwaukee for night classes. Now, the local technical college is offering continuing education classes at a nearby high school. Arigato, gozaimasu!

I'm thinking of writing the editors with this point, but I want to get my thoughts together on it first. I don't want to come off like a ravening barbarian from the frozen wastes. The point is, learning on your own isn't that

bad an idea. Language tapes are readily available, and if the price is prohibitive, you can always see if other folks would throw in with you for the set, then dupe copies for yourselves. The only thing to fight over then is the book...

And then there's anime. (You knew I'd get around to that, didn't you?) Where better to hear the colloquial language, if you're not near a Japanese neighborhood or exposed to Japanese co-workers or other acquaintances? Hearing the language is vital to learning it properly. Differentiating between the sounds we don't have in English (like "su" and "tsu") is made simpler when you can hear it over and over, in "real situations" rather than in a repetition of single words or phrases.

MANGAJIN, of course, doesn't touch on this facet of Japanese culture; it's devoted to the print medium of manga, and that's just fine. This magazine prompted me to get a copy of "FOR LADY," one of the many ladies' manga printed weekly. These are aimed at the young woman, working outside the home (most likely), and the stories tend toward the romantic. (I got a real kick out of the ads—the one for "Virgin Pink," particularly, being some kind of health or beauty preparation in a little jar; I have no idea what it was for. None at all. But the name cracked me up.)

That's it. It's time for my long-threatened subject, "One Easy Way to Incorporate Japanese into Your Daily Life." Get ready, because it's a long one.

If you're like me, you have at least one calendar you look at more than once per day. (I have three in my office and one in my purse.) Since you look at this

thing so often, why not use it to help you with your Nihongo?

Write the days of the week above the English names. Sunday is "nichi yobi" ("-yobi" has a long "o"). Monday, "getsu yobi." Tuesday, "ka yobi." Wednesday, "sui yobi." Thursday, "moku yobi." Friday, "kin yobi." And Saturday is "do yobi." The days of the week are named after the seven elements, starting with Sunday: sun, moon, fire, water, wood, gold/metal, and earth. "-yobi" means "day of the week."

For those of you who are interested in this kind of thing, I offer this tidbit. The kanji for "day" (as in "Sunday") means "sun flying by on birds' wings," and represents birds flying over a mountain. Is it any wonder that Japanese are famous for poetry and the arts, when their everyday language uses such poetic concepts?

Now, write the names for the dates.

Here's a chart:

1	tsuitachi
2	futsuka
3	mikka
4	yokka
5	itsuka
6	muika
7	nanoka
8	yoka (long o)
9	kokonoka
10	toka (long o)
11	juichi nichi
12	juni nichi
13	jusan nichi
14	juyokka
15	jugo nichi
16	juroku nichi
17	junana nichi
18	juyoka (long o)
19	jukyu nichi
20	hatsuka

- 21 niyuichi nichi
- 22 nijuni nichi
- 23 nijusan nichi
- 24 nijuyokka
- 25 nijugo nichi
- 26 nijuroku nichi
- 27 nijunana nichi
- 28 nijuyoka
- 29 nijukyu nichi
- 30 sanju nichi
- 31 sanjuichi nichi

I don't know why "nichi" is used sometimes but not others. ("It's a Japanese thang; you wouldn't understand.") All I can say is, it gets easier when you see them every day. I can tell you, though, that "nichi" used in this manner means "day of the month."

One more thing to do: names of the months. These are so easy, it almost hurts. "One month," "two month," "three month"... that's it. Here they are:

January ichi-gatsu
 February ni-gatsu
 March san-gatsu
 April shi-gatsu
 May go-gatsu
 June roku-gatsu
 July shichi-gatsu
 August hachi-gatsu
 September ku-gatsu
 October ju-gatsu
 November juichi-gatsu
 December juni-gatsu

"Gatsu" is drawn with the kanji for "moon."

That's the least to do, in order to present yourself with Nihongo on a daily basis. Should you want to go a little further, try this. Make sentences like "Today is Monday, January 28. Yesterday was Sunday, January 27th. Tomorrow is Tuesday, January 29th." Here's the formula.

Kyo wa getsu-yobi, ichi-gatsu nijuhachi nichi desu.
 Kino wa nichi-yobi, ichi-gatsu nijunana nichi deshita.

Ashita wa ka-yobi, ichi-gatsu nijukyu nichi desu.

I slacked off and stopped doing this, and was amazed at how quickly I forgot what was what. I started again, and it came back to me almost as quickly. Do yourself a favor, if you decide to take this route to enhance your learning, keep with it. It's easier than forgetting and relearning.

By the next column, I'll have been in a Japanese class for a few weeks (provided enough people sign up for it). More as that situation develops!

* * *

The fifth installment of this column already! It really is true what they say about time flying when you're having fun. I can't believe I've been doing this this long. While no one's written any complimentary letters about this wagging, there hasn't been any hate mail either, so I guess I must be "giving the public what they want." Therefore... If the Chicago-area (and those of us from the Frozen Wastes) members of the 'Zone are any indication, I'd wager that quite a few of you reading this have by now ventured into a nearby (or faraway) Japanese store of some kind, be it a shoten (store selling groceries and other common goods) or a honya (booksellers) or even a video rental store. Perhaps, then, it's time to touch on things you may need to know when in a store like one of these. The inherent danger in asking any question in Nihongo is, of course, you'll get an answer in Nihongo as well. A co-worker of mine prided herself on learning to ask "Where's the bathroom?" in Japanese, completely forgetting that by asking in Japanese, she would be answered in Japanese. Luckily for her, the woman not only spoke, but gestured down a hallway and mimed a turn or two, so our intrepid restaurant-goer was able to find the ladies' room despite not understanding a word of the answer she

got.

If you can speak a little Japanese, but want to be sure the person to whom you're speaking knows you don't know a lot of Nihongo, say this: NIHONGO GA SUKOSHI DAKE
 WAKARIMASU (nee-hone-go gah s'koe-sh' dah-keh wah-kah-ree-mahss), "I understand only a little Japanese." (SUKOSHI sounds a lot like our word "scoche", meaning "a little"—I've heard that they took it from us, but I have yet to see it written in katakana as are other loan words.) DAKE means "only." WAKARIMASU is the verb "understand". Alternatively, you could say NIHONGO GA SUKOSHI DAKE HANASHIMASU (hah-nah-she-mahss; "I speak only a little Japanese"). Go with whichever seems more appropriate for you.

Or, you could just ask if the person speaks English: EIGO GA HANASHIMASU KA? (aay-goe gah hah-nah-she-mass ka)

Naturally, KORE WA? or NAN DESU KA? or NAN NI? will serve as "What's this?" ("Nan desu ka" is probably preferred, as it's more polite, and it's always best to err on the side of stuffiness in this language.) HON DESU: It's a book. MAGAJIN DESU: It's a magazine. (Yes, note the similarity to "Mangajin"... what punsters, these Japanese! The more you learn, the more you'll see why they are so fond of wordplay.) I won't try to come up with lots of other possible answers to this... the two given are so simplistic, you'll probably never hear them. Just be wary of asking questions to which you won't understand the answers!

KORE WA IKURA DESU KA? means "how much is this (thing here close to me)?" The answer will come in Japanese numbers... I don't know how many times to say this. Be sure you can understand the answers! Get your counting down, as well as your hundreds (HYAKU), thousands (SEN),

and ten thousands (MAN) before trying this one. Also, be aware that YEN is abbreviated to EN when spoken as a price.

SORE WA IKURA DESU KA? "How much is that (thing there next to you)?" Remember that KORE means a thing near you, and SORE means a thing near the person to whom you're speaking. ARE, a third form of "that," refers to something not near either of you. DORE means "what thing?"

DEPATO WA NAN-JI KARA NAN-JI MADE DESU KA? "What hours is the department store open?" (From what hour to what hour?) GOZEN is the a.m., GOGO is the p.m. "Gozen kyu-ji kara gogo go-ji made desu." From 9AM to 5PM. Fill in your own store, cinema (EIGA), restaurant, etc.

Also, be aware that the first time you say something in Nihongo to a Japanese store employee, you are likely to get some really odd looks. I'll relate two incidents that happened to someone very near and dear to me, and one that could have but didn't (because neither of us was thinking fast enough). This near and dear person wanted to order a particular manga title. The regular sales person wasn't in (she was at lunch), and a young woman we'd never seen before was on duty along with two others, one of whom we'd seen before and knew to speak English quite well. He asked to order this manga, and when she asked for the title and he said "Dragon Breeder," she drew a blank. He then said it syllable by syllable, with Japanese pronunciation: "Do ra go n Bu ri da." She still drew a blank, but her eyes got even bigger when she heard Japanese syllables coming from him. She turned and motioned to the woman who spoke better English, to whom he repeated his request, and she nodded and said "Dragon Breeder? Hai, hai—Do ra go n Bu ri da," and motioned to the other girl to write this down on the order form. It was as if a talking dog were in

the store, if one were to go by the look on the first woman's face. Gaijin simply don't speak Nihongo! (And kokujin... well, that's even odder!) On another occasion, this same near and dear person was writing a check for a purchase at this same store, but the regular counter person was on duty. She told him the amount of purchase, and to verify the cents amount he said, "Sanju-kyu?" (39?) She barely missed a beat in responding "Hai," but it was obvious she hadn't expected him to ask her in Japanese. (However, it's becoming more "usual" for us now, and they're growing used to it a little at a time. Now that our "regular" person knows we're learning Nihongo, she drills us on our katakana by pointing to words on covers of magazines we buy and asking us to read them!) The incident that didn't happen but could have (and we wish now would have, just for grins) is as follows. Again, in this same store but much earlier in our experiences there, we were purchasing a magazine and some books. The counter people were tag-teaming that day; that is to say, one was ringing amounts on the register as another was reading them off the items. The register person had missed an amount, and asked "Kore wa?" as she held a magazine aloft, indicating which price she had missed. We SHOULD have said, "Magajin desu!" just for yuks, to see what they'd have done... but, being the slow-witted gaijin that we were at the time, we missed that golden comic opportunity. Be assured, that won't happen again. It's great fun learning this language, since there seem to be relatively few of us (compared to those who take the Romance languages, but our numbers are growing) and we share stories of frustration and confusion, tempered with levity. MANGAJIN has started a bloopers section, for just that kind of thing. I have a few of my own, again thanks to my friend who asked about the bathroom and the GENIE network's Japan Forum. (Maybe I should ask her to do a guest column?) One of those is as follows: A man was

visiting friends in Japan, and they told him they were going to show him some boats. He expected traditional Japanese boats, with sails and the like, but this was a motorboat/speedboat exhibition. To remark on this, he THOUGHT he said "Japanese boats aren't like Chinese ones, they're like American boats," but instead of FUNE (boat) he said MUNE (chest, bosom). Amidst many looks of embarrassed amusement, he repeated his error several times, finally jumping up and down, pointing at a boat, shouting "MUNE! MUNE!" (I don't suppose Japanese bosoms are much like American ones, at all...) Of course, he was politely corrected by his bemused friends. If you have humorous anecdotes along these lines, PLEASE send them to me c/o the 'Zone box, so we can all have a good, hearty chuckle. More than any of the other languages I've studied, this one lends itself to that kind of error so well, it's a shame to keep bloopers to ourselves!

This ubiquitous friend of mine is taking aikido, and so she's learning Nihongo as well but for different reasons. She comes up with questions like, "What's the proper response to 'gomenasai' when the person who says it has just stumbled over your foot in class?" As I alluded to earlier, she's online with GENIE's Japan Forum every week, and gets answers from the folks there (many of whom are native speakers, so have a good handle on odd situations like that). The answer to the question, by the by, is "Do itashimashite." (It's nothing. Don't worry about it.)

* * *

Well, we've been going to Nihongo class since late January. We're two of the youngest there (no big surprise), and the teacher wasn't quite sure what to make of us at first. I mean, we came in with books in hand, and copies of Mangajin, and knowledge gleaned from anime and manga... and when I mentioned that I was also studying Kanji on my own, her eyes got a little

larger. The class is meant to be Japanese for Business, and that's what the majority of the folks are there for, but they're interested in the anime/manga perspective. The other students are fascinated by our self-found knowledge, and have been asking some questions at break time about anime: what it is, where it's done, and the like. I'd love the chance to show some to them. Videos are used in the class, but of course they're such things as "Frontline: American Game, Japanese Rules" and "Kodo: The Heartbeat Drummers of Japan." (I must admit, though, the drummers are fabulous, and if they're ever on tour near you, GO SEE THEM!) Lemme show 'em some SHURATO!!! I finally passed out copies of the ANIME 101: What's With the Cartoons? essay I wrote for use in the 1991 Winter Fantasy con's anime program. They loved it. (And as an aside, at the risk of tooting our horns too loudly: One wouldn't suspect that the class members who already took one semester of Nihongo had taken any at all. Regarding pronunciation skills and speaking speed, we're ahead of the game by quite a bit. And, naturally, we owe it all to anime!) We've been treated to strange Japanese munchies at class break time: some fried green peas coated with powdered wasabi, little rice crackers, and some nasty tiny dried salty-sweet fish. WHOLE nasty tiny dried salty-sweet fish. Yuk. (I countered with some yummy little ginger-flavored, powdered-sugar dusted shell-shaped cookies. Not all Japanese snacks are yukky.)

* * *

For those of you who have taken the step toward learning either of the syllabaries (hiragana or katakana), I can recommend a couple of books to you. The first is "Remembering the Hiragana," by James W. Heisig (Japan Publications, ISBN 0-87040-765-1, \$5.95 US). In this little text, the author promises that careful readers will be able to learn all 46 characters within

three cumulative hours of study. While the kana are presented in A-KA-SA-TA-NA order, that is not the order in which they are learned. Rather, they are grouped by shapes, and the reader begins somewhere in the middle of the book, then follows the boxed numbers at the bottom of each page. One lesson contains six to eight kana. The mnemonics for each character are wild, weird, and staggeringly memorable because of it. My favorite is for the syllable MI. It looks like this:



The key word (the one that contains the sound of the character) is "meat." We are asked to envision the seven dwarves (see the shape of the numeral 7?) throwing boomerangs (the author's term for that loop and curve at the bottom of the character) at kangaroos, and using their little daggers (his term for the shape made by a single horizontal line crossed by a vertical one) to carve them up for steaks (meat). This is precisely the kind of off-the-wall imagery that memory experts tell us to concoct, so that a name or a word will stick with us. The great thing here is, Heisig's done all the imaging already; we just have to see the pictures and make the connections. The other book is "Remembering the Katakana," by Heisig in conjunction with two other writers whose names escape me at the moment. I'm sure where you find one, you'll find the other. If, like me, you're attempting the kanji as well, there is a two-volume set of "Remembering the Kanji". Heisig is the author of those too, and Asahiya nearly always has them in stock.

AND ANOTHER THING... Now that I'm into the Japanese culture/language/food scene, I have to clear the air about a common misconception: the confusion between SUSHI and SASHIMI. For the first and last time in this

column, sushi is not only raw fish! SASHIMI IS raw fish. Period. Nothing cooked, steamed, grilled... just raw. Myself, I like a little rice with my octopus. The basis of SUSHI is vinegared rice, shaped and combined with vegetables, seaweed of various types, and (often, but not always) raw, steamed, or grilled fish. MAKI-ZUSHI are cylinders of the vinegared rice, filled with vegetables and/or fish and wrapped in NORI (seaweed), then cut into inch-long pieces for serving. NIGIRI-SUSHI, the most popular type, are finger-shaped oblongs of the rice, topped with either a kind of fish (raw or otherwise) or, one of my favorites, a thick, sweet omelette. (That's a dessert sushi, meant to be eaten last.) Often the nigiri-sushi have a layer of WASABI (that volcanic Japanese green horseradish paste) between the rice and the topping. Be advised that a serving of sushi is two pieces, and at \$2.50 to \$3.75 a serving, the cost mounts quickly. Both makizushi and nigiri-sushi can be eaten either with the fingers or with chopsticks (HASHI). There are techniques for each; look in any book on sushi for explanations of these. (I will tell you, though, don't let your fingers touch your lips! It's bad form.) The other kind of rolled sushi is TE-MAKI; these are also hand-rolled, but are shaped into a cone rather than a cylinder. Two or three cones equal one serving. These are eaten with the fingers; remember not to touch your lips with your fingers. Servings of sushi are presented with a small lump of wasabi and a portion of pickled ginger, artfully arranged of course. Personally, there's enough wasabi in the micron-thin layer already on the sushi for my gaijin tongue. The ginger is meant to be eaten between types of sushi, to cleanse the palate and prepare it for the next taste sensation. A neat trick, if I do say so. There's another kind of sushi that's not shaped at all, just tossed into a bowl rice first and topped with the various other components, usually vegetables and seafood. This one's eaten with hashi. Oh, and should you find yourself

in a sushiya preparing to order several kinds, and wondering which are raw and which aren't: AMAEBI (sweet shrimp) is raw. ANAGO (conger, or sea, eel) is smoked and grilled, and tasted a lot like "normal" smoked fish. I expected it to taste "wilder," somehow, but was pleasantly surprised. (There's also freshwater eel, but I don't know if it's raw or not.) EBI (shrimp) is steamed. HAMACHI (yellowtail) is raw. HIRAME (flounder) is raw. HOTATEGAI (scallops) are steamed OR raw. I've had them steamed, cut into little chunks, dressed with some kind of orange-colored sauce, and put on top of rice held in place with a strip of nori, in the manner used for caviar-topped sushi. (Go to Happi Sushi on North Clark for this delight.) They can also be raw, served nigiri-sushi style. IKA (squid) is steamed. MAGURO (tuna) is raw. TAI (sea bream, known here as red snapper) is raw. TAKO (octopus) is steamed.

Find a sushiya (Happi Sushi, just mentioned, or Shiroy Hana [white flower], also on North Clark, or the one attached to Kampai, at Oakton and Elmhurst, next to Asahiya) and try some yourself. It may require a bit of

driving, but it'll be worth it. Also, here's a bit of sushiya etiquette you should know before you enter the shop. There'll be a counter with seats, and there'll be tables. If you sit at the counter, it's assumed you're a sushi gourmet and you'll be ordering a la carte, as it were, choosing precisely what you want from the ingredients on display behind the glass case. If you sit at one of the tables, it's assumed you'll be ordering a standard combination plate of several kinds of sushi, at a set price. Frankly, I don't know how strict a rule this is here in the States, but at Koto in Milwaukee, it was pretty fast and loose (relatively speaking). Most of the people at the counter were Japanese, and most of those at the tables were not. (Of course, the fact that the non-sushi dinners, like the tempura platter and the tonkatsu, came in sectioned boxes about 18" by 14" by 3" precluded eating those at the counter anyway...) We were at a table, but we still ordered a la carte from the sushi counter. One difference I noticed between Koto and Happi Sushi was Koto didn't offer any combination platters, but the other one did. I don't know how prevalent either trend is here in the Frozen Wastes, but I suspect that

on either coast, a more traditional attitude prevails, and the gourmets sit at the counter where they can order precisely what they please while the gourmands sit at the tables and order standard combination plates. (If anyone knows for certain, please tell us!) If Japanese food is your thing, there's a magazine you should know about called "Palate Pleasers." It's only put out twice yearly, and it's \$4.95 an issue (subscriptions are \$11.90 postpaid). The main subject is food, but there are also articles on festivals and other aspects of the culture, like geisha and ukiyo-e. At the back of the magazine are listings by metropolitan area of restaurants AND groceries where Japanese food and foodstuffs are readily available. Of course, I first saw this publication at Asahiya, but later on I found an issue at PickNSave (of all places!). It's worth hunting for, I find. (There was a great article on sashimi in Volume 9, 1990, and one on maki-zushi in Volume 10, 1990.)

ENOUGH! I've really run on this time, but it's all stuff I wanted to share with you. There was bound to be something for everyone this time! And next issue... space-anime terminology! Ki-otsukete-ne!



ANIME MISCELLANEOUS

Lovely Angels

Lyrics: Lynn Matheis
Melody: "Johnny Angel"



Lovely Angels
You mean destruction to me

Lovely Angels, how we fear them
How we pray that they will pass us by
Although it's not their fault
Too many people die.

Lovely Angels solve their cases
The computer clears them of all blame
But when they're done
The place is not the same.

Kei and Yuri, don't get carried away
Your guns aren't meant for play
Please keep them put away
If you should come to our planet some day
It's really tempting fate
I dare not contemplate
Lovely Angels, how I dread them
And, although they scream that it's not fair,
I think they well deserve the name
of "Dirty Pair".



Have Attitude, Will Travel

Book 1 - Part 2

"Trial by Fire"

(WHAT DO YOU MEAN BUSTER LAUNCHERS AREN'T USED FOR HAND TO HAND COMBAT?!)

Forty-five days later, the Knights were in one of the training halls of Float Temple. Under the direction of Lie Ex they were practicing their hand to hand combat skills. Their fatimas sat off to one side making comments, most of them sarcastic, about their masters' performance. Lie Ex stood watching them as Newton and Karen walked up.

"How are they doing?" he asked.

"I haven't seen anybody with such a penchant for dirty tactics since you." She drew her spud and slashed at his head. He parried and jumped back.

"Just keeping you in practice." She smiled and put her spud away.

"How bad are they?"

"How's four broken arms, two broken legs, eighteen broken ribs, a shattered spine, five resig..."

"I get the point."

At that moment, a door opened and a grim-faced Aisha walked in.

Newton has seen that look before. It always meant trouble.

"What's wrong?"

"There's trouble on Kalamity Goderce."

Newton called the others over to hear.

Aisha repeated the sentence.

The importance of this failed to register.

"We're the Wester Mirage Corp." Aaron twirled his spud casually, narrowly missing Wilard's head.

Wilard casually parried and without missing a beat asked, "What do events around Norther have to do with us?"

"W.H.I.N.E.," said Aisha flatly.

That one word got their attention immediately. Deon's spud snapped to ready, as did Aaron's, Wilard's, and William's. Tina stopped scratching Kay's back and reached for her own spud.

"W.H.I.N.E.?" asked John. "Tell us more."

"W.H.I.N.E. has gone to Kalamity to get the meight who created your fatimas."

The fatimas were quite alarmed at this, but the Knights stood there looking puzzled. "So? We have about twenty years to deal with that problem, then."

"No, you don't. Apparently at the same time that he was making your fatimas, the meight also made a few others for himself."

"Nobody noticed the extra fatima tanks laying around?" asked John.

Aisha looked at the floor to avoid their eyes. "Anyway they've woken up and W.H.I.N.E. has gone after them."

"It could just be that they want revenge, too," offered Deon. "We did make them look bad."

"Who is 'we', Mr. Spud-between-the-legs?" asked William.

"Anything else we should know?" asked Newton, trying to steer the discussion back on track.

"They've taken the Rainbow Boowrey with them as support."

The silence that followed was deafening.

"It only gets worse," sighed Wilard. Lynn patted his back.

The other fatimas stared at Aisha in shock.

"You didn't mention the Boowrey," said Karen. "Don't tell me they got overlooked too?"

"You really should have your memory looked at," said William calmly, snapping his spud against his palm.

"Let's get this straight," said Tina. "W.H.I.N.E. and the Boowrey have gone to Kalamity to get the meight who created our fatimas because he secretly made another bunch."

"Yes."

"And I take it that you want us to do something about it?" finished Kay for her.

"Well... Yes."

"And what, pray tell, are we going to use against them?" asked Lyra, hands on her hips. "Harsh language?"

"That's the other problem."

"I have a bad feeling about this," sighed Sasha, leaning her arms on John's shoulders.

"Your mirages aren't ready yet..."

"We know that," retorted Ariel. "That's why we're still here, and not kicking ass at Wester."

"...But they will be by the time you get to Kalamity."

Knights and fatimas looked at each other, then turned to Aisha and chorused, "Explain that. Please. Fast."

"I'll explain as we walk." With that she walked through the Knights and out the door.

The F.W. Knights stood there wondering.

"What do you..."

"MOVE IT!" screamed Lie Ex. "HANGER BAY! DOUBLE TIME! MOVE YOURSELVES NOW!"

Out of shock (and fear of the wicked witch of the Easter), the Knights, with fatimas in tow, hauled it to keep up with Aisha. Reaching the bay, they saw a cruiser completing preparations for launch. They followed Aisha on board. The hull reverberated as the hatch slammed closed and the engines powered up.

Within a very few minutes later they were en route to Kalamity.

"O.K. Aisha, out with it. Now." Newton stared at F.E.M.C. #2.

"Your Mirages are on board, and they're being worked on even as we speak."

"You mean that we have to use 'made in transit' Mirages when we get there?" demanded Wilard, somewhat horrified by the thought.

"And, use them against the Boowrey?" added Lynn, equally shocked. "Without any testing?"

"Against people with the reputation of ripping the heads off babies and using the spines to pick their teeth?" concluded a slightly hysterical Monica. Kay slipped an arm around her fatima and tried to gently shake her back to normal.

"You're exaggerating things," said Aisha. "Besides they don't do that to babies."

Monica relaxed a little. Kay patted her shoulder.

"Just to fatimas they capture," Aisha muttered softly, under her breath.

"Why us?" asked Newton. He had no desire to go head-to-head with the Seven Gods of Death. At least, not without a tested, experienced squad. "Amaterasu has to have others around that could deal with this. Knights with working mortar heads."

Aisha shook her head. "W.H.I.N.E. launched a series of attacks and raids around Easter which have most of the others tied up. Besides, we thought the ladies here would want to be the ones to rescue their father."

"We do," started Victoria. "It's just that we don't

want to get these guys killed," she said, indicating the Knights. "We're just starting to get them broken in."

Newton looked over his troops. He could order them to fight, but he wasn't too thrilled with the idea himself. Besides, they were just recruits. He didn't blame them for being scared. Seasoned veterans were wary of...

"Oh well, nobody lives forever," said Deon with another fatalistic shrug.

"I'd wanted to get a few more years out of this body," said William.

"Don't be greedy."

"It's our job, it's our duty to stop them." Willard saluted Aisha sarcastically.

"If I die, they're coming with me." Aaron tapped his spud on the table. "In lots of little pieces."

"So much for the retirement benefits," added Kay. "I knew they looked too good."

"I wonder if they have sake in the afterlife," thought Tina aloud, filling everyone's cups. She looked at the remnant sloshing in the bottle, shrugged, and tossed it off.

"If we gotta go, let's show 'em what it means to be a Mirage Knight," said John. The others roared in agreement, raising their glasses. "Besides, we outnumber them." Everyone roared again. The fatimas hugged their masters in joy.

A mixture of pride and worry swept over Newton. Pride that his people had decided to goon their own, and worry because they were so up for going after the Boowrey.

"They're either crazy, or stupid," he commented to Karen.

"If they were smart or sane, they wouldn't have joined you."

Aisha smiled to herself. She hadn't been wrong about them. So what if they were a little weapon crazy? They had, after all, what it took to be Mirage Knights.

"Now if you'll follow me," she said to the happy, if suicidal, group, "I'll show you how far they've gotten on the mortar headd's."

She led them to the main bay. Most Mirage bays on cruisers were quiet, simply storage areas for mortar heads, but this one was alive with frantic activity. This cruiser was designed to hold ten mirages, but now eight of the berths were occupied. Work was going on in seven of them. Each berth had a number above it corresponding to its respective Knight. In No. 1, sat Newton's Chimera Mirage. It was the only one that was whole. Numbers 2-8 contained skeletal frames of varying shapes and designs. Amid all the chaos, a lone golden figure could be seen giving directions, making corrections, and working on some of the mortar headd's himself. One of his assistants noticed the Knights and nudged him. The slim man dropped down from his perch on a complex tangle of cables and came over.

"I don't know how I let you people talk me into this," complained Ladios. He looked like he hadn't slept in a week and was covered from braid to shoes with dirt from crawling inside of things.

"Begging the emperor's pardon," said Newton bowing, "but it was your idea."

Ladios sighed, wiping his hands. "Don't remind

me."

"Any idea when they'll be finished?" asked Aisha. "Soon. And don't worry. Once they're finished, I'm going to leave the area and stay out of trouble."

"He always says that," commented Newton. Karen nodded. "Always."

"I wouldn't dream of causing my lovely Aisha any trouble."

Aisha's smile showed all her teeth. "If you really meant that, you'd take me with you on your vacation."

Fortunately for Ladios, a shout summoned him at that moment. He smiled and left. Quickly.

"Nice try."

"One of these days..."

The others were looking at their own mirages. Even half-finished, they had a certain beauty to them. Tangles cables and support structures could not completely disguise the deadly potential. A gun was hoisted up and maneuvered into position to the accompaniment of loud shouts.

Aisha turned back from watching Ladios depart, and instead watched the Knights stare at their Mirages. She remembered the first time she'd seen her own Mirage. She understood their fascination, and cleared her throat loudly. "You're going to spend more time in those than you can imagine. Why don't you go change and try to relax before things really get busy?"

The Knights looked down and noticed that they were still wearing their practice outfits. Judging by the looks on their fatima's faces, they concluded that showers might not be a bad idea.

Following Aisha, the Knights and fatimas left the bay behind and went off to their rooms.

Norther rose slowly over Kalamity Goderce. A lone house sat out in the desert. It was unremarkable except for two things. 1) This house belonged to a meight and 2) it was surrounded by half a dozen mortar headd's and a tank division. The defensive presence of the latter was a direct result of the former. This was the house of the meight who had caused so much trouble with his creations. The defenses had been lent to him, with a little persuasion from Emperor Amaterasu, from the Kneue Slytiss. The knights had been there for some time now and were getting bored.

"Do you really think anything is going to happen?"

"Here? In this desolate hole? Get serious."

"Sir, the tank commander wants to know if they should start serving breakfast."

"What are they serving?"

"The usual."

Not crepe suzette again, he thought. "Arlen, do you want something to eat?"

"Yes," replied his fatima.

"Right, start passing out the..."

He stopped talking as the air around them began to crackle.

"Incoming teleportation! Everyone to battle..." His words were cut off as a mortar headd appeared in front of him. The Knight recognized the profile. Boowrey. It was the last thing he thought as the Boowrey's power launchers obliterated his Siren. The tanks began to move into firing positions, as a second teleport field appeared behind them. The

rest of the Boowrey appeared. Ten minutes later, the only things moving were the Boowrey.

Inside the Red Boowrey, Vralgo Kentaury saluted his own troops. He had ordered them here just to provide a little diversion in an otherwise boring day.

"This is Boowrey Red Head. The area is secured. You can come in anytime." Vralgo laughed as he watched the black and silver cruiser approach. Any group with a name like W.H.I.N.E. needed all the (albeit expensive) help it could get.

Hours later, the now-showered Knights sat with their fatimas in the ready room. All of them were dressed for combat and getting very impatient.

"How much longer?" asked John, drumming his fingers on the table.

"Five minutes less than the last time you asked," replied Aaron sarcastically, after being jarred out of his mental check list.

"Are you in a hurry to die?" asked Deon, equally irked.

"I'm just tired of waiting."

"Aren't we all?" said Wilard, trying to calm things down.

"Come on," said Lynn. "We shouldn't be jumping at each other."

"That's right," said Karen. "Save it for when we get down there."

An uneasy silence came over the group.

The door opened, and Aisha walked in, straight into a wall of tension. Forcing her way through, she walked to the center of the room to get everyone's attention. When that didn't work she screamed. Loudly.

When they all looked up, she spoke.

"The Boowrey have already arrived on Kalamity."

The tension level in the room doubled. Aisha slashed herself some air space with her spud.

"The troops guarding the meight were slaughtered."

"How long did it take?" asked Lyra.

"Is it important?"

"HOW LONG?" repeated Sasha.

"Ten minutes."

"We're doomed," whined Monica. Kay rubbed her back to keep her from falling over.

"What else can happen?" asked Tina.

"A W.H.I.N.E. cruiser is also there. That type of cruiser holds twelve Sirens."

"When will you learn not to say things like that?" sighed William, bending to help Kay pick Monica off the floor.

"That can't be all," said Deon. "You haven't totally crushed our will to live yet."

Aisha blushed, and nervously added. "We arrive in fifteen minutes."

"That'll do it," sighed Ariel, burying her face in Deon's back.

Aisha turned to Newton, who hadn't said anything during this whole exchange.

"You're very quiet."

"Would it help if I got uptight and aggravated like them?"

"Well... No"

"Then why should I?"

This made more sense than Aisha wanted to

think about at the moment.

"Are the Mirages going to be ready by the time we get there?" he asked.

Aisha shook her head. "Ladios needs at least another thirty minutes. We don't have the time to wait." She paused. She thought she had noticed a slight crack in his aura of calm. Aisha looked Newton in the eyes. "You'll have to go down yourself and keep them busy until the others are ready."

Definite crack there, she thought. Bordering on total shatter.

Karen was just as un-thrilled as Newton. Her glare wilted the top six inches of Aisha's hair.

"Are you sure?" Newton asked, trying not to let his nervousness show.

"Ladios is working as fast as he can. But..."

"I know, he's only human."

"Well," said Karen, resigning herself to the inevitable, "let's get going then."

Newton drained his glass, and took Karen's arm. "Let's do it." They walked together out the door, and followed Aisha to the hanger. The others, having nothing else to do, followed in a somber procession.

Ten minutes later, the cruiser hit Kalmity's supper atmosphere and the group arrived at the hangar. Things had changed dramatically since their last visit. (Ladios had banned them after the first). All eight bays showed signs of activity. Newton's Mirage was being preflighted by the crews in preparation for combat. The major change in the others was that the skeletal frames now had skin. The armor plating for each was being attached. Six were finished, the last two looked like they'd be ready to go in a few minutes.

"You sure he's human," asked Kay, somewhat amazed (as were they all.)

"Sometimes I wonder," whispered Aisha.

The person in question came over. He looked even worse than before.

"Five minutes," said Ladios.

"Until they're all ready?" asked John hopefully.

"Until my vacation starts," replied Ladios. He shrugged. "Same thing." He went off to finish up the last one.

Looking over the railing, the Knights got their first real look at not only theirs, but everyone else's Mirage. Up until now, they had only seen them on paper and in their imaginations. Now, they had taken on several hundred tons of reality.

"Y'all are some sick people," commented Newton, looking over the bays' occupants.

Ariel nudged Deon and pointed to the berth next to theirs. Deon nudged Wilard.

"What?"

"What's that in there?" Deon pointed to berth No. 9.

Wilard stared, not quite sure of what he was seeing.

"Well? What is it?"

Wilard had been around enough miesters to recognize it. "It's the very beginning construction of a mortar headd."

"That means," Ariel started, "either they're expecting somebody to get seriously trashed. Or..."

A cheer went up from the work crews.

Ladios ran up to them. "They're finished."

The Knights stepped back to look at them all.

Berth 1 held Newton's Chimaera Mirage, in itself a frightening thing. No. 2 held Kay's. It was a giant scorpion in the same scale as Newton's. Its right claw was an oversize version of the claw shield use by some Mirages. The left was a smaller version of the same. The tail, however, was something special. It held the Mirage's Buster Launcher.

"That's some stingeryou've got there," said Newton, walking down the hangar.

"Every scorpion needs one," answered Kay.

"Still won't be enough," moaned Monica, certain that death was still imminent

No. 3 was John's spider centaur. When erect, it stood about 24 meters high to the top of its head. However the torso was designed to fold back into the spider body for increased speed. The head was elongated so that when the body was folded back, the head lay smoothly along the body.

"You know, started John, "given the movement rate for an average spider, this thing could probably break the sound barrier running."

"And that's just ground speed," added Sasha, grinning maniacally. "Wait till you see it in the air." Newton didn't want to think about it.

Berth No. 4 was Tina's, and in it was something truly strange. It was a 25 meter high silver lady, done in Victorian style. Its bizarre design belied its deadly capabilities very well.

"I don't even want to know."

"You'll just have to wait until combat starts then," smiled Tina, in a very unnerving way.

No. 5 belonged to William, and it held the 25 meter "Pumped" Mirage. This thing was as far from looking like a Mirage as possible, even though it was painted the regimental blue and black. Two wing struts protruded from its shoulders, and two smaller ones from its arms and head. (dangaio)

"What's with all the stuff stickin' off of it like that?"

"They're all modified spines," said William.

"They were all his idea," added Lyra.

Wilard's Naught Mirage occupied berth No. 6. It was a 22 meters high black winged demon. It was smaller and more lightly armored than the rest. It relied mostly on speed and maneuverability than power. But its plasma launchers didn't hurt it any.

"What was the thinking behind this one?"

"It transforms into a flyer," explained Wilard.

"You're joking."

"Just wait," said Lynn, taking Wilard's arm and smiling at him.

These people have the most unnerving smiles I've ever seen, thought Newton.

The Iron Phantasm was in berth No. 7. Aaron's creation had missile launchers in its legs and on its hips of varying type, depending on what was needed. It also had a huge cannon over its left shoulder and a female face.

"Mine's still prettier," Victoria whispered to Begonia. "So there."

The prevalence of missile weapons, and relative lack of energy weapons made Newton doubt the power of the Mirage's power plant. "What's its power output?"

"Yes," replied Aaron.

"I beg your pardon?"

"It has 'Yes' power output. ALL the power I

need, when I need it."

Newton shook his head. You can't argue with thinking like that, so why bother?

The occupant of berth No. 8 looked like a close relative of No. 5. It had the same basic type of design with the struts on the shoulders, arms, and head. But in this case, the Mirage was 23 meters high, more stocky than the other, had two half circles on each wrist and one in its chest, and was painted blood red and blue/black. Deon called it the "Pray It's Just a Mirage". (zeorymer)

"Why the name?"

Deon shrugged. "Seemed appropriate, don't you think?"

"Would you really want to meet this in a dark alley?" asked Ariel.

Newton didn't want to look at it now. That paint scheme hurt the eyes. He turned and looked at the group.

"Well, what you waiting for? We got a meight to save."

"We're waiting for you to give the order to go," answered Begonia.

"Well, go then!"

"Thank you, Newton," they all chorused, bowing, and ran for their Mirages.

"I'm either gonna love 'em, or kill 'em," Newton stated flatly.

"Talk later, let's move," said Karen, pushing Newton toward their Mirage.

"Do you enjoy doing this?" he asked, grabbing for support.

"Around you, it just comes naturally."

Knights and fatimas ran up the stairs on the gantries, across the walkways and climbed into their respective cockpits.

Down below, Ladios yelled over the P.A. system. "Power up one at a time. In case something goes wrong, we don't want two or three of you exploding all at once."

"You're real funny, Sopp," was the general reply from the group. (Actually, other words were used, but this is a family story). "Who wants to go first?" asked Tina.

A low whine echoed through the bay as a Mirage came on line. The Chimaera Mirage walked out. "Well? I'm waiting."

Going down the row, they switched on. The whine grew progressively louder.

"Ready when you are," said Kay.

"The only way to go," said John.

"Is this trip really necessary?" asked Tina.

"Forward into the jaws of death," said William.

"Forward through shot and shell, here we go into the mouth of hell," said Wilard.

"I HUNGER!" said Aaron.

"It's showtime," said Deon.

The gantries and walkways retracted. The bay echoed as the Mirages took their first steps. As the cruiser settled into landing position, the First Wester Mirage Corps. moved toward the door.

The area around the meight's house had been occupied for several hours now. Night had fallen over the landscape. The remains of the defence forces had been cleared away and replaced by half a dozen Sirens. A black and silver cruiser loomed over the house now. Next to it was the ship of the Rainbow Boowrey. With their mortar headds back

on board their ship, the Boowrey had sat down to a victory dinner on the W.H.I.N.E. cruiser.

"You're as good as your reputation," said Julia, raising her glass to them.

"Unhappy costumers are bad for business," said the Red from beneath his mask. "Though I don't see why you should go through so much trouble for a bunch of dolls."

Jenny looked up, about to respond, when Frank stepped on her foot and motioned for her to be quiet. The last thing he wanted was to get into a fight with the Gods of Death. Jenny glared at him, but said nothing. The Red Head noticed this, and smirked.

"Fatimas are useful," said Julia, trying change the direction of the conversation. "As long as the opposition has them, we'll need them too."

There were yells and comments about just what fatimas were good for from the rest of the Boowrey. Jenny got up and left. Frank followed her. This brought forth even more comments from the group.

"What a bunch of jerks," whispered Eric to Matt.

"When you're that good, you can be that cocky."

"That still doesn't mean that I have to like being here with them. Doug had the right idea."

"You mean not coming here?"

"Yeah, I..."

A very heated discussion was going on out in the hall.

"I don't want to be around them," fumed Jenny.

"It's only temporary," said Frank, trying to soothe her. "They'll be leaving tomorrow."

"It's not soon enough!"

Frank led Jenny up to the bridge to talk to Doug.

"I knew you'd end up here," said Doug, not looking over his shoulder as they walked in.

"How can she stand them?" Jenny asked.

Doug shrugged. Changed the subject.

"Tomorrow's the day."

"You're going to try to impress one of the new ones?" asked Frank.

"I gotta get lucky sooner or later."

One of the screens started to beep. The operator there leaned over it.

"What is it?" asked Doug.

"There's a mortar headd approaching from the West. Range: 1000 km and closing."

"What type is it?" asked Frank leaning forward. All of theirs were accounted for.

The operator ran the readings through the computer and checked them against known mortar headd profiles. "It looks like one we almost ran down going to Addler. Just a minute..."

"What's it doing here?"

The report appeared on the screen. The operator almost had a heart attack.

"IT'S A LED MIRAGE!"

Frank and Doug paled.

"Are you sure?"

The tech nodded.

"Wonderful," sighed Jenny. "Trapped between two groups of psychos."

"There's only the one of them," said the tech.

"Yeah," said Frank, looking much more cheerful. "It's four against one."

"May I remind you that you're the only one with a fatima?" said Doug sarcastically. An idea suddenly struck him. "Why should we go out and get shot at, when we have those guys to do it for us?" He

pointed at the Boowrey's ship. "Isn't that what we're paying them for?"

"Doesn't seem fair to the Mirage," said Jenny.

"It's what he deserves for being where he's not wanted," concluded Frank.

In the dining room, Julia had come to same conclusion as her aides about these people. She was desperately searching for a diplomatic way to end things when Frank, Jenny, and Doug came in.

The Red Head sneered. "Is the doll through with her little hissy fit?"

Frank ignored this and the laughter coming from the others.

"There's a mortar headd approaching."

Dead silence.

"What type?" asked Matt.

"Mirage."

"How many?" asked Eric.

"Just one."

"Right," said Julia, thankful for diversion. "Get the Sirens ready to go."

The Red Head laughed. "Only one?" He turned to Julia. "My lady, allow us to deal with this inconvenience. Free of charge." He stood up. "Besides, a little exercise after eating always helps dinner go down easier. Let's go."

The Boowrey got up and walked toward the door. Red stopped and turned to Frank.

"Why don't you come with us? We'll show you just how useless fatimas are."

Frank opened his mouth, prepared to give him a scathing reply.

"Why don't you go with them?"

Frank turned and looked at Julia, not quite sure he'd heard what she'd just said.

"Go with them," she said, walking toward him.

"It should be interesting for you."

Frank was about to protest, when she whispered in his ear.

"Keep an eye on them. If possible, bring the Knight back alive."

"Well, are you coming?"

Frank turned and took Jenny's arm, and walked toward the hangar.

After they all left commotion broke out.

"Was that smart?" asked Matt.

"Maybe not," answered Julia. "But right now, he's the best equipped of us to go."

"Anything left to eat?" asked Doug.

Eric gestured at the table. Doug sat down to finish up the leftovers while the others went up to the bridge.

"Where is it now?" asked Julia as she entered the bridge.

"It came as close as 950km, then turned around," reported the tech.

"Where is it now?"

The tech boosted the power on the sensors. "Distance is now 1275km and increasing."

"It's really moving," said Matt.

"Must be using a flight system of some kind," said Eric.

"Notify Frank and the Boowrey," ordered Julia.

"It's stopped. Range: 1300km."

"Probably a recon unit," said Doug from the doorway, munching on a chicken leg.

"They're about to get more than they expected."

The lone Mirage sat on the desert floor.

"You think they saw us?" asked Newton.

"Blind, deaf, and dumb they couldn't have missed us," answered Karen. "I told you, minimum sensor range on grounded ships is 1000km, but do you listen?"

As if to prove her point the air around them began to crackle.

"Company," Karen said. She began to bring all of their weapons on line.

Eight figures appeared around them.

That there were eight of them was a surprise. The eighth was a white modified Siren, almost as bulky as the Boowrey. But the most surprising thing about it was that it had two wings attached to its back.

Newton looked the insignia on its veil (shield). It was his first look at a W.H.I.N.E. mortar headd. He wondered if they were all that ugly.

"You're a long way from Easter," said the Red Boowrey.

"You're a long way from Wester," Newton countered.

"True, but at least we'll be going home." The Boowrey armed their power launchers. "Any last words, Knight?"

"Yes. Y'all can come out now."

The ground buckled, and erupted as a giant scorpion crawled up out of the ground outside the circle of Boowreys. On the opposite side, a equally large spider came out. A ring of explosions blew over several of the Boowrey. One explosion happened right under Frank, pitching him forward. Vralgo looked at what was going on around him. Two of his men were facing giant insects, one of which was unfolding into some type of centaur <<unfolding some type of Mirage torso from its back>>. The rest of his troops, plus that add-on, were lying on the ground. Six large holes gaped in the earth. Must be some type of mine, he thought. Clever of him to lure us out here, but it'll take more than a few mines to stop us.

At that point, out of each hole rose a mortar headd, each one stranger than the last. Vralgo realized, a bit late, that they were surrounded.

"Who are you people?" he asked the new arrivals, as his men got back to their feet.

"We have come here to chew bubble gum, and kick ass," said William. "And we're all out of bubble gum."

"We are the First Wester Mirage Corps," stated John.

"And we're here to kill you," said Tina.

Frank had just gotten to his feet when he heard that. He turned and faced the red and blue one in front of him.

"First Wester? You're those psychos from the impression ceremony!"

"Right first time," said Wilard.

"Tell me," said Newton. "Do you have any last words?"

Vralgo laughed.

"And I thought this was going to be a dull evening."

Julia's voice came shrieking in on Frank's radio.

"What's going on?"

"It's those psychos from the impression ceremony."

There was a moment's pause, then over all frequencies came a terrible roar.

"10,000 CREDITS TO THE PERSON WHO BRINGS ME THAT JERK'S HEAD!"

They all knew who she was talking about. The one who had embarrassed her in front of everyone at the ceremony. Frank wondered which one of these strange creations that poor sod was inside of.

Ten meters away, the person in question sat laughing hysterically.

Vralgo laughed again. "Ten thousand credits! In that case, blow each one apart and find the head among the wreckage."

"Easier said than done," retorted Newton.

"Get them."

The Boowrey's power launchers fired. The bolts tore through empty space, as the Mirages were already moving to attack. Frank, lacking power launchers, drew his sword, and got punched in the face by the one facing him. He forgot about the sword and turned to grapple with him. In the middle of the desert, the battle was joined.

From the word go, it was clear that this was not going to be a duel between gentlemen and ladies. This was going to be a knock-down-drag-out-Texas-chainsaw-streetfight. The Boowrey found themselves fighting people who were just as adept at hand-to-hand as they were, if not better.

Vralgo swore loudly in his cockpit. These Mirages, despite their strange appearances, were surprisingly fast and agile. They kept moving too fast for them to hit, and when they did stop, they struck. Hard. The radio was alive with the chatter of his men complaining and, could it be, asking for help? That Blue, he always was such wimp, being afraid insects. He smiled at the fact that it was Blue that was facing that giant scorpion. He was jarred out these thoughts as the leading Mirage scored another hit, cracking the armor on his left leg.

Kay was having a lot of fun. The one in front of her seemed to be afraid of her. This made her job all that much easier.

"See, Monica, I told you there was nothing to worry about."

Monica grunted non-committally.

Kay sighed.

The Blue Boowrey, while backing away, stumbled.

Kay saw her chance and charged forward. She locked her Mirage's claws on the Boowrey's legs above the knees.

"What are you doing?" asked Monica, somewhat surprised at this course of action.

"He just a little too tall. I'm going to bring him down to our size," said Kay with an evil grin.

The Boowrey was starting to panic as Kay pulled the lever to close the claws. The Mirage's heel spurs, all eight of them, dropped down.

"Huh?" went both Kay and Monica's minds.

The tail of the scorpion swung up and pointed at the Boowrey.

"What are you doing Monica?" asked Kay, slightly horrified.

"It's not me," the fatima replied, equally shocked.

The charge began to build in the gun. "Well, stop it!"

Monica tried several controls. "I CAN'T!"

The cockpit glowed red as the charge neared firing levels.

"Warn the others."

Monica tried the switches several times, then tried pounding her fist on them. "The radio's not working."

Kay spared a moment to be glad that everybody was behind them as the blast visor dropped.

The Blue was managing to get control over his fear. He reached out and grabbed the scorpion's tail. He shoved it down slightly, just as it went off. Due to the shock of the blast, and the position the Boowrey was in, the head fell off and landed behind the scorpion.

The night lit up as the fabric of the universe was torn apart. Things on the battlefield came to a sudden halt. Vralgo was shocked. These people would use Buster Launchers just to get rid of one mortar head? he thought incredulously. They're insane, and that makes them all the more dangerous.

The Knight were equally disturbed.

"WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?" came from the other seven Mirages. They looked at Kay's scorpion, sitting at the bottom of a smoldering crater, still holding on to the Boowrey's legs.

"I...I...I just tried to cut off his legs, and it... it fired," she sounded very shocked. "There's something wrong with this thing."

"Buster Launchers do not arm themselves," said Newton sternly.

"Admit it, Kay," laughed Deon, "you're just as... nbgrrrrh" The last words emerged as a strangled noise as his Mirage rocked under several impacts as the white Siren chose that moment to start the fight again.

Following that lead, battle resumed.

Down in the crater, Kay and Monica decided not to try any other controls for fear of what might happen.

John circled around the Green Boowrey, trying to get between him and Kay. The Boowrey, limping as a result of a previous shot by John that had crippled is right leg, tried to pace him. The Mirage pulled out its spud and switched it on.

"Ready, Sasha?"

"Let's go!"

John hit the controls, and the spider shot... backwards.

"What the..." said John.

"What's with you?"

John switched the controls to go backward. And started to spin around.

The Green Boowrey stood there, not quite sure what to make of this.

John tried left and right controls with no response. The spinning continued unabated.

"Sasha, what's wrong with this thing?"

"There's a mis-connection in the linkages to the legs."

"Can you fix it?"

"Do I look like a miester?"

"Can you at least by-pass the problem areas?"

"No."

"Anything else?"

"It's also shorted out the weapon systems."

"Wonderful."

"By the way..."

"What?"

"Boowrey, 10 meters and closing."

John looked up as the Green charged, as best it could, forward. He brought up his spud to block the Boowrey's attack and the blade went out.

"I told you," repeated Sasha, "the weapon systems are out. It was only a matter of time before the spud died."

John backed away from the Boowrey as fast as possible, trying to give himself time to think.

Tina maneuvered behind a small hill for a short rest. The silver-cable hair, held in place by several hairpins, and the long earrings chimed softly as the Mirage moved.

The prospect of fighting with what looked like a piece of art seemed funny at first to the Aqua Boowrey. Funny, that was, until the streaks of black decorating the silver skin folded out into spikes, and tore his left arm off. Aqua's fatima reported that one hour had gone by. He snarled at her for disturbing him with such trivial information. "Arm the power launchers, you useless dolt!" he yelled at her. She obediently bent over the controls.

The disturbance caused by Kay's Buster Launcher caused rare clouds to form in the desert. It started to rain a fine mist.

"They're arming their power launchers again," reported Victoria.

"About time." This was what they had been waiting for.

Climbing the hill, the Mirage reached up and pulled out two hair pins. They switched on into spud blades. The Mirage reared back and threw them into the Boowrey's shoulder-mounted power launchers, which exploded.

Aqua screamed in pain and anger as the Boowrey toppled.

"What's the damage?"

There was a slight delay as his fatima calculated the damage.

"Both power launchers are gone, external armor cracked down to mid-torso, right arm does not respond..."

"Enough," he screamed, then coughed up blood.

"What does work?"

"Weapon systems are still working, as are the legs."

Aqua gritted his teeth, and brought the Boowrey to its feet.

Tina and Victoria rejoiced. Not only had their plan worked, but they hadn't taken any serious damage themselves - and the opponent was hurting bad.

"I told you it work," smirked Tina.

"Never doubted it for minute," Victoria answered, then paused. "He's getting up."

"How's his fatima?"

"Fine."

"Good."

"Huh?"

"I'll explain later."

"Ok. One more time?"

"Yeah. Aim for the legs this time, please."

The Mirage pulled out four pins this time, leaving only two behind. Most of the Mirage's "hair" came undone and spilled down nearly to the ground. As the Mirage reared back to throw again, the "hair" wrapped itself around the Mirage's arms, pinning

them to its back.

"What did you do that for?" asked Tina. The "hair" was designed to do that to other mortar headd, NOT HER OWN.

"I didn't," protested Victoria.

"Hit the release for it then."

"It won't work. THE BLADES ARE STARTING TO CUT INTO US!"

"Turn them off!"

"I CAN'T LOOK OUT!"

Tina looked forward and saw the Aqua Boowrey bearing down on them. She moved to back down the hill, but with the Mirage bundled up like that, they slipped and rolled down the slope instead.

On Victoria's screens the entire lower half of the Mirage winked out. Tina tried to stand, but the legs didn't respond.

Anticipating her question, Victoria calmly reported, "The blades cut through the spinal column. Nothing below the chest will respond."

"Victoria..."

"Yes?"

"Can you bend over and kiss our ass good bye from this position?"

"Uh... No."

"Practice. Quickly," advised Tina as the Boowrey came to the top of the hill.

Not too far away, the Pumped Mirage was dueling with the Orange Boowrey. Sparks flew as their blades clashed again and again. The Mirage lunged forward. The Boowrey blocked it, and reeled as the Mirage followed up with a kick to the side. The Boowrey was hard pressed. It couldn't take the time to arm its other weapons because of the Mirage's constant attacks. The Mirage suddenly veered off and jumped back. That was your first and last mistake, thought the Boowrey as he ordered his guns to be charged, just as the Mirage's spud planted itself between the headliner and fatima compartments. The blade severed all communication between the two.

The Pumped Mirage landed relatively lightly on its feet (considering its overall mass).

"Nice throw," complimented Lyra.

"Thank you," said William. "Ready for Phase 2?"

"Give the word."

"It's given."

The Mirage twisted back like a baseball pitcher. Lyra activated the Mirage's version of power launchers. Unlike the Boowrey's, these were built into the arm of the Mirage and fired out through the palm. The palm glowed brightly as William brought it forward. For dramatic effect, he switched on his external speakers and screamed, "PSYCHIC WAVE!" as he hit the trigger.

Nothing happened.

"Uh, Lyra..."

"The weapon systems just cut out."

"Well, get them back on line."

Several seconds later the speaker came on again. "I can't. There's a short in the linkage... somewhere."

"So what do we do now?"

"Well, first, we could stand up straight. We probably look very silly standing like this."

"And after that?"

"Hey, you're driving this thing."

"You're a wonderful help."

"I'm trying."

"Yes, you're very trying."

"Here he comes again."

The Boowrey, spud in hand, was charging toward them. Bill noticed, with some despair, that his spud had fallen to the ground.

"Just as dead as the weapon systems," he moaned.

"Look on the bright side."

"What bright side?"

"All he can use is that sword, and what can he do with that?"

The Boowrey slashed at the Mirage. Bill tried to deflect it and lost three fingers on his left hand.

"Lyra."

"Yes?"

"Shut up."

The Purple Boowrey fired its guns, but like all the times before, they passed through empty space. The Boowrey swore loudly and repetitively as the Nacht Mirage kept proving itself a very difficult target to hit. The rain was starting to come down harder and was making the Boowrey sluggish.

Wilard smiled as the Boowrey's actions became wilder and wilder. He jumped back as it slashed at him again. He switched on his external speakers.

"A mortar headd affected by water? I should have brought a giant water pistol."

The Boowrey charged him.

The Mirage pulled out two whip-like objects that had "beads" on them and began to spin them around. The Boowrey had closed to 30 meters when he threw them and leapt further back. One wrapped around Purple's right arm, the other around its legs. When they finished wrapping, the S-mines detonated.

Safely out of the blast range, Knight and fatima watched the results.

"You missed the knees," said Lynn irritably.

"Close enough."

"If you had gotten the knees, it would have blown his legs off."

I hate it when my fatima is more kill crazy than I am, he thought.

"We've slowed him down anyway. How shall we finish him?"

"How about a strafing run?" Lynn asked innocently.

"Sounds good to me."

The Mirage leapt into the air and folded up into a bat shaped flyer and soared upward to get speed for its dive. The radio came alive as the others began relating their problems and asking for any help that could given. He veered suddenly as two object blew past him, one falling, the other driving the other down.

From its high vantage point, the Nacht Mirage could see all the combatants. He quickly determined that Tina was in the greatest need and radioed that he would help her after finishing up with his current opponent. The Mirage flipped over and dove down, arming its missile racks. Half way down, it suddenly began to unfold.

"LYNN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

"I'M NOT DOING A THING!"

Half of the Mirage had transformed back to its original form. But the other half was still in flyer mode. Bill pulled back hard on the controls, trying

to pull up before they slammed into the ground. They managed to level out and skim the surface before plowing into it.

"Are you alright?" asked Lynn.

"No major, or permanent damage."

"Good, then you can deal with him." Bill looked up and saw that they weren't far from their old playmate, who was slowly, and shakily getting to his feet.

Bill tried the controls. The part that was in Mirage mode tried to stand up, while the part in flyer mode tried to take off.

Looking up at the slowly approaching Boowrey he commented, "This might be more difficult than I thought."

"No kidding," sighed Lynn.

Aaron heard the reports from the others, and had just watched Wilard almost nosedive into the ground. There was something definitely wrong these Mirages. If the others had these problems, then more than likely he'll have them too. If that's the case, he thought, better get rid of this guy fast. His eyes never left the Yellow Boowrey.

"Begonia."

"Yes?"

"Arm the Air Barrel cannon."

Begonia brought the huge cannon over its left shoulder on line. They took aim at the criss-cross pattern of missile impacts on the chest of the slightly smoking Boowrey. Aaron hit the trigger, and the Iron Phantasm shut down. Aaron restarted the Mirage.

"This time, Begonia, use the missile launchers again."

"O.K."

Aaron hit the trigger again, and the same thing happened again. The Mirage's systems all shut down.

The Boowrey had recovered from the shock of all those missile impacts that had broken several of his ribs. The offending Mirage was just standing there and hadn't moved. Not questioning any opportunity, he went for his spud. He then realized that his left hand was gone. He drew it with his right and charged.

Aaron started up the Iron Phantasm again, and went for his spud. It shut down again.

"It's the weapons system," said Begonia. "We shut down when we try to use it."

"I thought so." He started up again. "Being right is one thing, doing something about it is another." He began to dodge the thrusts of the Yellow.

Newton listened to the reports as best he could, as the Red was proving that he was the best of the Boowrey. Both their mortar headd had taken damage, with the Red now pressing the attack.

"All the problems are coming from the weapons systems," said Karen. "Once activated, they start screwing with the other systems."

"Somebody's going to pay for this with his life," Newton said, visions of torturing a certain meister dancing through his mind.

"Within ten minutes, everybody's called in with problems."

"No, not everybody," said Newton, hitting the radio as the Mirage rocked under another impact.

"What do you mean 'have I used my weapon systems yet?'" demanded Deon impatiently.

"Just answer the question!" snapped back Newton's voice.

"NO!"

"Don't."

"Why?"

"It'll short out all your other systems."

"Terrific. Can I get back to killing this guy now?"

"Suit yourself."

"Thank you." He then let fly a kick into the side of the prone Siren in front of him.

Frank wondered how he had gotten himself into this situation. An hour ago, when this started he thought it would be an easy fight after he displayed the fact that he could fly. He wasn't ready for that fact that the Mirage he was fighting could also fly. And had also proven himself to be very adept at hand to hand combat. It hadn't help that the Mirage had rammed him into the ground from several hundred feet up. His head was still ringing from that.

"J... Jenny..."

"Yes, darling?"

She sounded surprising well for the beating they had been taking.

"How are you?"

"Fine."

"You're not hurt?"

"No. He's aimed all the damage at you. Even when he did that dive, he did it so that you would take most of it. By the way, one more solid hit and you're going to have a clear view of that rainstorm out there."

Right, that does it, thought Frank. He's going to trash me and my Siren but be nice to my fatima. We'll see about that.

The Siren started getting to its feet. The rain was coming down in sheets. It made standing up difficult for the Siren.

"We can't beat all the Boowrey into submission," said Ariel.

"I know, this one's bad enough. He doesn't know when to give up," answered Deon, as he charged forward again.

The Siren backed off, spread its wings, and took off just as the Mirage swung at it.

The Mirage stumbled in the mud, but recovered before falling.

"Why'd we run away?" asked Jenny.

"We're not running away, just putting some distance between us," explained Frank. That was partially true, after all. The other part was that he didn't want to get any closer to that Mirage than he had to.

"Stand by for a 'Hellfire'."

"You sure?"

"Do it."

The Siren dropped what was left of its veil as missile pods opened in its shoulders and legs.

"They're preparing to fire," said Ariel.

"It's times like this I wish we had a veil."

The Siren unleashed a wave of missiles, only slightly heavier than the rain, at the Mirage below. The Mirage was engulfed in explosions. The Siren drew its spud.

"Now what?"

"Now we go in, finish them off, and take the fatima back as a present for Julia."

"Think that will keep her quiet for a while?"

"Probably not," sighed Frank, "but what else can you do? Let's go."

The Siren dove down into the cloud of smoke, spud aimed at where the headliner would be.

As they penetrated the cloud, the Siren reared back its arm, and thrust it forward...

Two arms came out of the smoke, grabbed the sword arm, and threw the Siren to the ground.

Frank looked up, and at that minute, the Pray It's Just A Mirage lived up to its name. It reared back its right arm to send it crashing into the headliner's chest.

Frank looked up, waiting for that fist to come down and end it.

It never did. In fact the Mirage didn't move at all.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE JOINTS HAVE SEIZED UP?" yelled a very irate headliner.

"The shock from all those missiles has had the same effect as arming the weapons," Ariel reported.

At that minute the same thought went through all of the Knights and quite of few the fatima's minds:

"IF I LIVE, LADIOS DIES!!!"

Part 2-2 next issue!

MEGAZONE CLUB BUSINESS

Greater Chicago MegaZone Treasury Balance Sheet

January 1990 through January 1991

Karen S. Boomgarden, Treasurer

		<u>Credits</u>	<u>Debits</u>
3/31	--	265.00	
3/31	Check printing fee		11.30
4/29	--	405.00	
5/21	Cash withdrawal (199X)		190.00
7/9	--	17.00	
7/28	199X Printing		76.98
	Mailing		20.00
8/18	--	433.50	
8/23	--	84.75	
8/27	--	320.00	
9/4	--	162.25	
9/17	--	101.00	
9/18	Picnic reimbursement		11.75
9/21	Mailing/Copy/Postage		280.00
	199X Printing		169.34
	Receipts/Files		11.23
9/23	Postage		50.00
9/24	--	114.50	
10/13	Overpaid membership		5.00
10/14	Laserdisc reimbursement		15.00
	Postage		50.00
10/22	--	360.25	
11/24	Postage		50.00
11/26	--	100.00	
12/6	Yule dinner		175.00
12/15	199X Printing		150.00
	Yule party extras		45.00
12/16	--	416.00	
1/4	Bounced membership chk		20.00
1/19	Deposit on T-shirts		500.00
1/19	Balance on T-shirts		360.00
		\$2779.25	\$2190.60
Balance		\$ 588.65	

A MEMORANDUM FROM THE TREASURER

Hear ye, Hear ye, Hear ye! The following members expire (well... not the people, the membership) in March and April of this year. I have been known to be lenient from time to time, but no more. If you don't get your renewal cash/check to me by the end of the month in which your time is up, your membership will lapse. Period. The only circumstance that won't affect this is your check languishing in the 'Zone PO box; since I'm not the one with the key, it's possible for your check to get there in plenty of time without my knowing it. (And for those of you out of state or out of country: your postmark WILL count, so be sure to get your check/money order in the mail by the end of the month.)

Why the hard line now? Well--it's like this; with 135 members, including FIVE foreign countries now, the paperwork is growing by the proverbial leaps and bounds. I don't have the luxury any longer of second-guessing who will re-up and who won't. No money, no membership. You Have Been Warned. (And thanks.)

MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRING IN 3/91

EWELL, David	3/90	#24
FLEMING, David	3/90	#21
GATES, Reginald	3/90	#29
HARRIS, Michael	3/90	#25
KING, Chris	3/90	#26
LEN, Vladmir	3/90	#30
LARUE, James	3/90	#19
MAZZARELLA, Marco	3/90	#20
MITCHELL, Marc	3/90	#27
OELKERS, Jeff	3/90	#22
PALMAIRA, Michael	3/90	#31
WASHINGTON, Michael	3/90	#28
WEST, Artie	3/90	#23

MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRING IN 4/91

BROWN, James	4/90	#38
COX, Mike	4/90	#35
GEMBECK, Frank	4/90	#36
JONES, Alex	4/90	#37
LENTINI, Tony	4/90	#33
McNAY, Robert	4/90	#34

CONAN: BOY OF THE FUTURE

Ron Santos

Conan: Boy to the Future was Hayao Miyazaki's premier effort at displaying his many talents as a chief director for a TV or movie production. The series, which aired October '78 to April '79, was very much a proving ground for many of Miyazaki's, now trademark, story telling elements: a post holocaust world; exotic flying machines, a militaristic power seeking to access a machine of destruction; a girl with "special gifts" who is the key to obtaining the energy source; and, a boy of superhuman athletic ability, who stands in the way of the ambitions of the leaders of the industrial war machine.

At the time of it's initial showing, Conan: Boy of the Future was considered one of the most powerful, and refreshing, stories to have ever been aired. It still stands as one of the greatest works in the world of anime.

Fans of Mr. Miyazaki's other work, Cagliostro's Castle, shouldn't have too much trouble accepting Conan's often ridiculous gymnastic feats (usually accomplished by his literal feet). Both works have more of a sense of joy for absurd acrobatics than his more complex offerings of late. Conan does, however, have a serious angle too. Miyazaki's

usual environmentalist message is evident enough. Yet, all in all, it is nothing less that a great action adventure, delivered with both barrels!

Please note that the source for this synopsis is the Spanish language version Conan: Boy of the Future entitled Conan: El Nino del Futuro. This Spanish version is completely faithful to the original telling, save for these two minor cases in point:

1. *In the Japanese version of the series, Conan's island is called "Leftover Island", and Lana's island is called "High Harbor". In the Spanish version, Conan's island is referred to as "Lost Island", and Lana's is called "Heaven Island"*

2. *"Dr. Lao" is called the more Spanish sound "Dr. Rao".*

It is the year 2028, twenty years after the third World War and the event known as the "Great Catastrophe". Due to the effects of the weapons used during the fighting, the five continents have sunk into the sea. Yet, few and far between, some places were spared the deluge which took the old world after the war. Hence, on these secluded islands, some people have survived. One such place is "Lost Island"; or so it is

called by the island's two sole occupants, the boy Conan and his adopted grandfather. They are completely unaware of the survival of any others besides themselves. Though they live well off of nature's bounty, it is a life of desperate isolation.

Their island is small, but lush with foliage. In the center of the island, on top of it's only hill, is the remnant of what was once a rocketship, planted nose down into the earth. Overgrown with ivy, it now acts as a shelter for the castaway pair.

In the house, Grandfather makes a journal entry:

"In the year 2008, the Third World War occurred. The nations used the new "Super-magnetic bombs", which were far more powerful than nuclear weapons. The great explosions of these powerful bombs diverted the earth's axis. As a consequence of this, all life on land, and in the sea, was almost totally annihilated. Man's world was suddenly destroyed by the catastrophes of these events."

Grandfather stops his writing when he hears Conan calling outside. He steps out to see what the commotion is all about. Upon meeting, Conan tosses

Grandfather a fish head; proof that a shark is raiding their fish reserves. Conan runs inside, grabs his trusty spear, and heads back to shore to face the thief. Grandfather barely has time to bid the boy "be careful" before he's gone.

Conan dives into the water, and begins to hunt the invader. On the seafloor around the island stand the remains of a city. Building and vehicles, crumbling and battered by twenty years of immersion.

Water is Conan's element. He moves as easily about in it as any of the fauna naturally found there. He is in the water for only a few seconds when he makes contact with the poacher, a shark with a white scar on it's nose. Conan manages to trap the shark for a moment, but is soon doing all he can from becoming the shark's catch of the day". At last, by applying boy's spear (A), to shark's heart (B), "White Nose" is sent to his ancestors.

Conan staggers back to land, but his fatigue is short lived as he

exalts in his victory over the shark. With his prize held overhead, Conan heads off to the house. He doesn't get far, however, as a tern flies into view and diverts Conan's attention back to the beach.

He sees the bird join a flock of terns that have gathered on the seashore, and who are acting very interested in something that has been washed up by the surf. Upon closer inspection, he sees that it's a person! Conan is shocked and confused, but finally, he nudges the person with his foot, she begins to come around. Conan asks, "Why are you so weak? Is it because you haven't eaten?" She looks up to see only the shark which Conan is still holding overhead. She screams and faints. Now, even more shocked and confused than ever, Conan runs home to get Grandfather.

Returning from the scene back at shore, Grandfather and Conan bring the girl back to their house, and the girl is rested in Grandfather's bed. He has Conan fetch water; which Conan all but breaks his neck in accomplishing; Lana drinks. The food is requested, and Conan is off. Grandfather asks the girl whether there are other survivors of the war. She answers yes. Grandfather gives thanks for the good news.

After having the girl, Lana, change into dry clothes (an event



Grandfather won't let Conan see), evening soon comes. Lana sleeps through dinner, only stirring during a shouting nightmare. She shouts to be "left alone", and that she doesn't know where a "he" is. Finally, she cries, "Grandfather, where are you?". Grandfather comforts her, "Be at peace child. I am here at your side". She then returns to a peaceful sleep.

In the morning, Lana is the first to awaken. Conan awakens immediately after, and he sees Lana heading for the shore. He follows after her, and finds her standing on a bluff, encircled by ferns. "I see. Thank you." is all Conan hears her say before the birds alert Lana to Conan's spying her from behind a nearby rock. They finally meet, and talk.

Lana talks about her island. Conan asks about how many people live there, and is amazed to find that there are more people there than he can count on both his hands and feet.

While giving Lana a tour of the island, they catch sight of two armed persons searching Conan's home. Leaving Lana in hiding, Conan makes his way to the house to investigate.

The leader, Mongery, orders Grandfather to call forward any other people who live there. Grandfather has had about enough of the strong-arm arro-

gance of his uninvited guests.

Grandfather: Things never change. Always the same! Has nothing been learned from the catastrophe which destroyed the world?!

Kuzo: Quiet old man!

Grandfather: You're the same as those who destroyed our society. Criminals!

Mongery: You can't say that! It wasn't us who started the war! It was you, the adults!

Grandfather is speechless. Mongery continues.

Mongery: We were children during the catastrophe. Sometime, consider the bitter lives which we've lived. You're all guilty! You adults, irresponsibly, had that war! You have no right to preach to us now!

Grandfather stands silent, then goes into the back of the house as if bowing to Mongery's demands, but emerges with a rocket launcher, primed and ready. He duly warns the pair to go away and never return. Mongery and her aid, Kuzo, act as if they are leaving, but Kuzo turns to fire on Grandfather. But Conan, who has been watching the whole play perched on a wall, hits Kuzo with a rock, throwing her aim off. The rocket launcher, however, is hit, and the weapon detonates. A

slew of small missiles burst out, flying in all directions.

Mongery and Kuzo have to run for their lives to avoid being hit by one of the bolts. Lana sees a missile bearing down on her, so she emerges from hiding to avoid being struck. Mongery and Kuzo spot her, and carry her off.

Conan, who is tending his wounded grandfather, is told by him to "help the little one".

Conan hurries to the shore and sees that the kidnapper's plane has almost departed. Conan runs, leaps, and manages to land on the plane's wing. He spears the wing with his harpoon, and hangs on.

The plane flies off.

After 30, Seiya 3, Hokuto 0

WELCOME FOLKS, FOR WHAT PROMISES TO BE A UNIQUE AFTERNOON. THE HOKUTO TEAM HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE. THERE'S THE KICK OFF... AND ITS FIELD BY BAT AT THE SAINT'S 45. HE RUNNING DOWN THE FIELD. HE'S AT THE 35,...30...25...HE CLEAR AND... WAIT MINUTE, ALL THE LINE MARKERS ARE RISING UP. THEY'RE ALL CHAINS! IN THE SAINT'S END ZONE, ANDROMEDA SHUN IS WRAPPING BAT UP WITH HIS CHAINS. BAT IS NOW A CHAIN MUMMY. HE DROPS THE BALL AND ITS PICKED UP BY PEGASUS SEIYA. SEIYA IS FLYING UP THE FIELD, BUT IN FRONT OF HIM STANDS KENSHIRO. SEIYA LAUNCHES THE PEGASUS METEOR FIST. KEN COUNTERS WITH THE 'HUNDRED FIST CRACK OF THE GREAT BEAR' AND SEIYA'S HEAD EXPLODES. BUT BEING THE COCKROACH SAINT (i.e. indestructible), HE SHRUGS IT OFF. HOWEVER, RAOH, KEN'S OLDEST BROTHER, USES HIS AURA TO BLOW A CRATER IN THE GROUND. SEIYA, ALSO BEING THE LEMMING SAINT, CAN'T RESIST THROWING HIMSELF INTO THE HOLE. BEFORE HE FALLS IN, HE HANDS OFF TO DRAGON SHYRIU. SHYRIU CHARGES UP THE FIELD TO THE 50 YARD LINE. RAOH IS GLARING AT HIM AND... HE'S BLEEDING!!! YES FOLKS, DRAGON SHYRIU IS ON THE GROUND BLEEDING. MY GOD, IS HE BLEEDING!! HALF THE FIELD IS COVERED IN BLOOD. BUT WAIT, HE'S GETTING UP... HE'S ON HIS FEET. THE DRAGONS JUST BLOWN HIS ARMOR OFF AND IS GLOWING BRIGHTLY,... AND HANDS OFF TO CYGNUS HYOGA BEFORE COLLAPS-

ING. HYOGA CONTINUES UP THE FIELD, AND ENCOUNTER REI, MASTER OF THE SOUTHERN SWAN FIST. HE GOES INTO ATTACK MANEUVERS. HYOGA GOES INTO HIS. WHAT'S THIS? THE TWO SWANS ARE HAVING A CONTEST OVER WHO HAS THE MORE GRACEFUL ATTACK MOVES. BUT HYOGA HAS DROPPED THE BALL, AND ITS PICKED UP BY LYNN. LITTLE LYNN IS CHUGGING DOWN THE FIELD AS FAST AS SHE CAN. WITH THE SAINTS BUSY, THERE'S NO ONE IN FRONT OF HER TO STOP HER. BUT WAIT,... A FIRE BIRD HAS JUST APPEARED IN FRONT OF HER. THERE'S SOMEBODY WALKING OUT OF IT. IT'S PHOENIX IKKI. IKKI LOOKS AT HER, AND IN A MOVE OF UNBELIEVABLE COMPASSION, HE DOES NOT FRY HER MIND. HE GENTLY PICKS HER UP,... AND DROP KICKS HER THROUGH THE UPRIGHTS FOR THREE POINTS. SO, AFTER THE FIRST 30 SECONDS, THE SCORE IS SAINTS 3, HOKUTO 0. WE NOW GO DOWN TO THE FIELD, TO TALK WITH THE COACH OF THE SAINTS, ATHENA. ...WHAT DO YOU MEAN SHE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED AGAIN?

It gets worse, but that's enough.

WESTERN ANIMATION

Tony Lentini

Raymond Briggs' When the Wind Blows

Running Time 85 minutes

"It should be compulsory viewing..."

"When The Wind Blows not only touches the heart but comes close to being the most disturbing animated feature since Animal Farm."

"The film is brilliantly animated from Raymond Brigg's book, using the music of Roger Waters and David Bowie to make its horrific point."

"...gives you the shivers."

These and other statements give you some idea of the power behind this film. Adapted from the comic book novel of the same name, "When the Wind Blows" tells the story of a retired couple living in the English countryside and their lives before, during, and after World War III. Hilda is an Edith Bunker type, concerned only with the running of the household. Jim, a veteran of World War II, has complete faith in his government to protect the people. "The powers that be will get to us in the end," he constantly tells his wife.

As the film opens, the world political situation is very shaky, and the

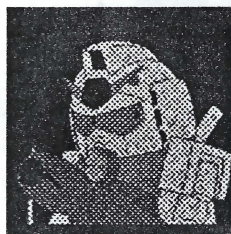
newspapers are filled with talk of war. A concerned citizen, Jim takes a survival pamphlet and begins to stockpile food, paint the windows of his house white, and builds a bomb shelter from doors placed against the wall precisely 60 degrees. Several days later, the radio announces that the missiles are on the way. Jim and Hilda take shelter as we watch the shock wave race across the countryside, destroying everything in its path. Jim and Hilda's house is damaged but not destroyed because they are so far from ground zero. The remainder of the film sees Jim and Hilda waiting for word from the outside world, as to how the war is going. As time progresses their health and sanity rapidly deteriorate.

The majority of the film is done by animating the figures of Jim and Hilda over film footage of a model house. Most of the time however, it is easy to forget that the house is a model and not a painted background. More detailed information about the production of the film can be found in Animation Magazine, Volume One, Issue 4.

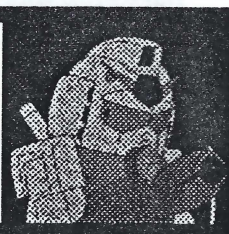
In the light of today's superpower

relations, "When the Wind Blows" may be as out of date as films like "Hunt for Red October", but is still capable of stirring strong emotional responses from its viewers. The film did in fact raise a certain amount of controversy in Europe when it was shown in theaters. Never released to American theaters, most any Blockbuster store should have a copy for rent. (When the Wind Blows was the cover news item in an issue of Animage magazine - Ed.)

Voices are by Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Sir John Mills. Direction by Jimmy Murakami. Music by David Bowie, Roger Waters, Genesis, Paul Hardcastle, Squeeze, and Hugh Cornwall. Produced by John Coates, responsible for the animation of "Yellow Submarine" and "The Snowman".



ANIME MISCELLANEOUS



The Secret of Blue Water
(fushigi no umi no NADIA)
opening theme:

>>> BLUE WATER <<<

Lyrics by Kisei Etsuko

Music by Inoue Yoshimasa

Arranged by Joe Rinoie and Suzukawa Maki

Performed by Morikawa Miho

Translation by Dan Su

yowaki na hito ga kirai aozora uragiranai
yumemiru mae ni watashi tonde ikitai

kokoro no ORUGO-RU ga hiraiteku hibiiteku
sukoshi zutsu no shiawase yuuki mo kanadedasu no

ima kimi no me ni ippai no mirai
kotoba wa eien no SHIGUNARU

Don't Forget To Try In Mind
ai wa Jewel yori
subete wo kagayakasu

kuchibue fuite kimi ni machikado aizu shitara
egao de nayami subete fuki tobu kanji

mitsume aeba shizen ni wakari au yurushi au
sawagashii hitonami no mannaka aruitatte

ima kagirinaku aoku sukitouru
kokoro ga sora yori azayaka

ima kagirinaku aishitai mirai
otagai kanjiru yo

kokoro no ORUGO-RU ga hiraiteku hibiiteku
sukoshi zutsu no shiawase yuuki mo kanadedasu no

ima kimi no me ni ippai no mirai
tashika ni maboroshi ja nakute

Don't Forget To Try In Mind
ai wa Jewel yori
subete no koibitotachi
subete no nakamatachi ni
kagayaki tsutaete dakishimetai hodo yo (kimi wo)

* * *

I hate timid people. I will not betray the blue sky
Before I dream I want to fly

My heart's music box opens and resounds
As it starts to play, little by little I feel more brave and happy

Now, in your eyes, I see a bright future
Words are an eternal signal

"Don't forget to try in mind"

Love is better than a jewel
It brightens everything up

I whistle and signal you at a street corner
With a smiling face, you feel all your troubles blow away

Whenever we stare at each other spontaneously,
We understand one another, we forgive one another
Even when we walk in the midst of a noisy crowd

Now, it's endlessly transparent blue
My heart is brighter than the sky

Now, I want to love the future forever
The feeling is mutual

My heart's music box opens and resounds
As it starts to play, little by little I feel more brave and happy

Now, in your eyes, I see a bright future
It's certainly not an illusion

"Don't forget to try in mind"
Love is better than a jewel
All lovers,
All friends,
Transmitting your radiance,
I want to hold you

* * *

Profile on Morikawa Miho

Real Name: Enokina Miho

Birthplace: Osaka

Blood Type: B

Birthdate: 5/5/68

Sign: Taurus

Miho-san's debut was in 1985 with the song, "Kyoushitsu" (classroom).

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Regarding the transliteration of the song, lowercase words are in hiragana, capitalized words are in English, and uppercase words are in katakana.

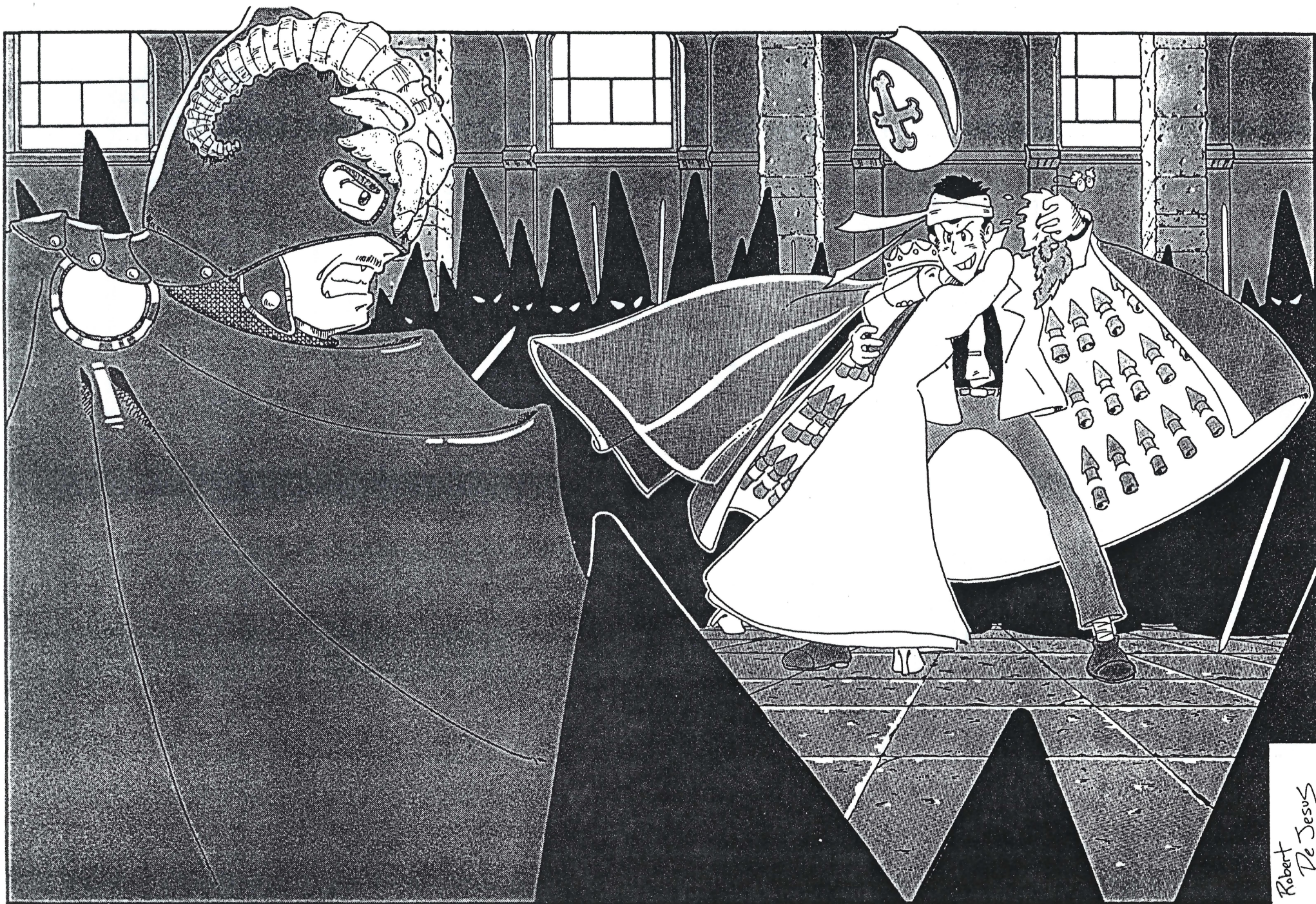
This song was difficult to translate! It's ambiguous and doesn't make much sense. Nevertheless, I did the best I could...(except for the line, "Whenever we stare at each other spontaneously". I think I translated it too literally. How about, "Whenever our eyes meet"?)

This is the full-length song. The actual TV series opening is slightly different. It begins with:

ima kimi no me ni ippai no mirai
subete wo kagayakasu...

and ends after the ninth line of the full-length song (subete wo kagayakasu).

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Robert
De Jesus